Amusement TODAY

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NEWSPAPER

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IAAPA Attractions Expo

PRE-CONVENTION ISSUE

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INSIDE:

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Amusement Today Pre-IAAPA Bonus Issue

IAAPA riding momentum into 2014 Attractions Expo

STORY: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Nov. — Coming off a record-breaking Euro Attractions Show in September and the June Asian show in Beijing, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) officials are anticipating big things when the 2014 annual Attractions Expo kicks off here later this month.

Coordinators reported in September that all indoor exhibit space at the Orange County Convention Center had been sold out for the event, set for Nov. 17-21.

There was still outdoor space available and a waiting list had been developed for last-minute openings inside the exhibit hall.

More than 1,000 companies from approximately 40 countries will showcase their latest and greatest products and services for 17,000-plus attraction industry buyers on the half-million-square-foot IAAPA Attractions Expo 2014 trade show floor.

Noland

"IAAPA Attractions Expo is the biggest and best venue for industry decision makers to find a wide variety of products to improve their facility," said IAAPA President and CEO Paul Noland. "The creativity, innovation, and business practicality found on the packed trade show floor is truly unmatched in our industry."

In 2013, approximately 28,800 amusement park and attraction industry professionals from 110 nations attended the Expo in Orlando. The trade show saw 18,100 buyers on the largest floor IAAPA had seen in 10 years.

Exhibitors were extremely pleased and the energy was palpable at last year's Expo, especially when the economy still seemed somewhat questionable prior to last year's event.

But, on the first day of the 2013 show exhibitors such as ProSlide Technology, Ottawa, Ont., saw a packed booth.

"We have been swamped," said ProSlide's Chelsea Ogilvie.

Stefano Moser, Moser Rides, had the same experience and it seemed all the traffic produced a very lucrative show for many.

Other exhibitors such as A.R.M. Rides, Chance Rides, Bob's Space Racers, Denny's Electronics, Rides 4-U, Eli Bridge Company, CPI Amusements and White-Water West Industries all echoed the same sentiments.

Those exhibitors will be back this year and IAAPA officials hope no one will be disappointed.

The momentum from the 2013 Expo did seem to continue in 2014. Both of IAAPA's international shows broke records this year. The Euro Attractions Show, held in Amsterdam, Sept. 23-25, reported its highest number of exhibitors, largest amount of exhibit space and record number of visitors. It was the

See EXPO, page 4

FAST FACTS

IAAPA Attractions Expo
Nov. 17-21, 2014
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Fla.

•

Trade Show Times/ Dates
10 a.m.-6 p.m.,
Tues.-Thur., Nov. 18-20,
10 a.m.-4 p.m.,
Friday, Nov. 21.

•

Projected Numbers
1,000-plus exhibiting companies from about 40 countries;
17,000-plus industry buyers, on 525,000 square-feet
of exhibit space
—Source: IAAPA

IAAPA chairmen share thoughts on industry

OUTGOING: Mario O. Mamon

Mamon leaves IAAPA chair humbled by his opportunity to serve

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Mario Mamon**, chairman and president, **Enchanted Kingdom**, Philippines, will turn over the IAAPA chair gavel at the 2014 IAAPA Attractions Expo (Nov. 17-21, 2014) in Orlando.

Mamon, the first Asian chairman and the first Filipino chairman of IAAPA, spent many days on the road throughout the last year and said he will have much to take back to the park he founded.

He is pleased with the progress IAAPA made under his leadership and is humbled by the many opportunities afforded to him.

Mario O. Mamon

Here, Mamon answers some questions for *AT* about his last year.

Last year, you told *AT* that your main focus as chairman of IAAPA would be to continue focus on IAAPA's 2013-2015 Strategic Plan.

See MAMON, page 6

INCOMING: Gerardo Arteaga

Incoming chair Arteaga wants to reach out to global FECs

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Gerardo Arteaga, Fantasialandia,** Santiago, Chili, will take over as chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions during this month's annual IAAPA Attractions Expo, Nov. 17-21, Orlando, Fla.

Arteago, whose family built Fantasialandia in 1978 and who is now the general manager there, has lived his life in the entertainment industry.

Here he spends some time speaking with *Amusement Today* about his upcoming year at IAAPA.

Gerardo Arteaga

For the last several years, the focus for the IAAPA chairmen seem to be on the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. Do you plan to continue that focus? When will IAAPA begin working on plans to reach past 2015?

Yes, having a three-year business plan has proven to be a strength.

See ARTEAGA, page 8

NEWSTALK

PRINT SUBSCRIBER NOTICE

Amusement Today would like to remind subscribers that as in the past, *AT* is publishing two issues for the upcoming IAAPA Attractions Expo, set for Nov. 17-21, 2014 in Orlando, Florida.

•**November I** (Pre-IAAPA) issue contains interviews and other useful information about the upcoming IAAPA event as well as a listing of registered exhibitors. It mails at its usual time, near the end of October.

•**November II** (IAAPA convention issue) is *AT*'s normal November issue and is our largest of the year, packed with useful news, in-depth exclusive interviews and late-breaking news along with features for your reading pleasure. This issue mails Nov. 10.

Both issues will be distributed at the IAAPA Attractions Expo trade show floor from *AT*'s booth **#4215** and from **IAAPA Publication Bin** distribution area located at **IAAPA Central**, near the center of the Orange County Convention Center.

AT will deliver both issues polybagged together to the **Hyatt Regency Orlando Hotel** (IAAPA headquarter hotel) and the **Hilton Orlando** for door-to-door delivery on Tuesday morning, Nov. 18.

AT reminds attendees to support the following partners by visiting these booths:

•AIMS International...5435
•Give Kids the World...3433, 3428
•NAARSO...4019
•National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives...4412
•New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA)...3233

To subscribe to the print and new digital versions of *Amusement Today*, visit the *AT* booth (#4215) or go to: www.amusementtoday.com.

On the cover

As an annual tradition, *Amusement Today* once again highlights on our Pre-Convention issue cover, the chairman of IAAPA and the vice-chairmen that will follow in the coming years. Due to change adapted last fall, IAAPA is no longer appointing a fourth vice chairman. Featured on the cover are incoming chairman, **Gerardo Arteaga** (2015); first vice chairman, **John McReynolds** (2016) and second vice chairman, **Greg Hale** (2017). The cartoon was drawn by *AT*'s longtime cartoonist **Bubba Flint**, whose work can also be seen in the *Dallas Morning News*, *Dallas Business Journal* and the *Dallas Cowboys Star*.

CARTOON: *Bubba Flint*

EDITORIAL: *Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com*

It's show time!

Mellor

The trade show season for the attractions and amusements industry is in full swing, with the key events for the parks and travelling carnival sector around this time of year being the Euro Attractions Show (EAS), held in Amsterdam, Holland, recently and the biggest of them all, the upcoming IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando, Florida.

Along with the Asian Attractions Expo held during the summer, and also organized by IAAPA, these three trade shows are key events in the industry calendar, bringing together thousands of industry players in a convivial atmosphere which typifies the friendly, sociable and fun nature of the business.

As I write this column, I am just back from my visit to EAS which was once again a record breaking event from the point of view of the number of companies that took part and the overall exhibit space that was taken up. Over the past few years this show has really come into its own and is clearly now the meeting place for the European industry each year, with an impressive trade show floor, a comprehensive educational program and a range of networking events.

Visitors on this occasion came from over 100 countries, while 441 companies exhibited, a significant increase on the 393 recorded at the previous year's show. It all augurs well for the future as the event continues to develop and attract increasing numbers of both exhibitors and visitors.

With such a successful and well established trade show in Europe it will be interesting to watch what impact this has on the IAAPA Expo in Florida in the future, in particular in respect to visitors from Europe and perhaps the Middle East. Some exhibitors in Orlando have, over the past couple of years at least, commented on a perceived reduction in the number of European park operators making the trip to the US, which isn't surprising. All the major manufacturers and suppliers go to both events nowadays and with these being just a few weeks apart, there is clearly not a necessity to keep visiting both year in year out.

But one thing is for sure – both events will continue to succeed and will continue to be imperative elements of the attractions industry's annual calendar.

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2 MINUTE DRILL

COMPILED: *Janice Witherow*

Gerardo Arteaga, Fantasilandia and new IAAPA Chairman

As a young boy growing up in Chile, **Gerardo Arteaga** dreamed of one day becoming the general manager of Fantasilandia, the popular Latin American amusement park. He is living proof that dreams really do come true. In addition to holding the top role at Fantasilandia, Gerardo is stepping into the position of the 2015 IAAPA Chairman and is looking forward to the projects, challenges and fun that come along with that distinction. His passion, commitment and experience in the amusement industry have prepared him for what lies ahead … and it helps that Gerardo has a good sense of humor and adventure.

Arteaga

Title
2015 IAAPA Chairman and General Manager, Fantasilandia in Chile.

Number of years in the industry
30 years.

Best thing about the industry
Innovation.

Favorite amusement park ride
High speed coasters!

If I weren´t working in the industry, I would be …
A yacht captain or a sports car engineer.

Biggest challenge facing the industry
The rising operational costs.

The thing I like most about amusement park season is …
When it´s over!

Favorite kind of snack
Really good French fries.

The last concert I went to was …
U2 '360' in 2011.

My ideal day off is spent …
Boating with my family.

My mother always told me …
Enjoy life!

The thing I look most forward to at the IAAPA Attractions Expo is …
What´s new in each area of our business.

If I were lost in the woods with nothing but an army knife, I would make a …
Lance for defense and then a roof.

The last time I went swimming was …
Last summer.

Do you eat out or cook at home most often?
Cook at home.

My next vacation will be …
After Christmas in the south of Chile.

Favorite drink in the morning
Cappuccino.

If I could watch only one TV show, it would be …
Big Bang Theory.

Biggest recent splurge
Large remote-control airplane.

What part of the day do you feel most creative?
In the morning.

The song I can´t ever seem to get out of my mind is …
U2's "I still haven´t found what I'm looking for!"

Favorite sports team
Colo Colo Football/soccer team in Chile.

My childhood ambition was to …
Be the Fantasilandia General Manager.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

COMPILED: *Richard Munch*

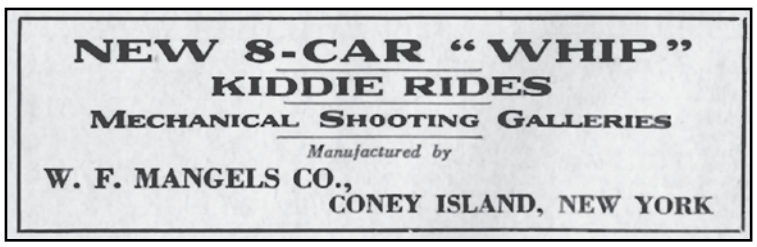
1932 history recorded in *Billboard*

•1932: This Month in History takes a different look at our industry past with this reflection on some key ads found in **November 1932** copies of ***Billboard*** magazine. The issues were from AT staffer, **Sue Nichols**, who donated them to the **National Roller Coaster Museum** for archiving.

Of interest is the first ad listed below from the **National Association of Amusement Parks** (now IAAPA) advertising for the 1932 Convention to be held in New York City, and home to 1000 park men and 100 exhibits.

My how the industry and this annual trade show has grown!

Make your 2014 visit to the **IAAPA Attractions Expo** in Orlando a good one.



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EXPO

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most successful Euro show in its 11-year history.

The Asian show, held in Beijing, June 18-20, broke records when 9,000 industry professionals participated.

All indications are gearing IAAPA show coordinators up for a great 2014 Orlando show.

The week-long Expo in Orlando was named the 28th largest trade show in North America by "Trade Show News Network." It generates $51.3 million for the Orlando, Fla., economy, which is just one reason why the Orange County Convention Center was pleased to reach a contractual extension agreement with IAAPA to bring the show there through 2025. Convention and IAAPA officials already had a contract agreement to hold the event there from 2010 through 2019.

The trade show, although an integral part, is not the only part of IAAPA's annual Expo. As already mentioned, there will be an abundance of in-depth educational experiences providing attendees valuable learning opportunities in key areas of attractions management and operations.

There are six different Institutes and symposiums being offered.

They are:

•IAAPA Institute for Rookies and Newcomers: Family Entertainment Centers;

•IAAPA Institute of Attractions Managers;

•IAAPA Human Resources Symposium;

•NEW, IAAPA Laser Tag Symposium;

•IAAPA Emergency Preparedness Symposium; and

•IAAPA Inflatables Symposium.

Also scheduled are more than 100 educational opportunities.

Diverse learning opportunities, including informative visits to many of Orlando's premier attractions and engaging presentations by some of the most respected names in and outside of the attractions industry, will be available.

Session topics will cover key focuses in the industry including social media, games, revenue operations, entertainment, marketing, food and beverage, human resources, safety, theming, and more.

Notable speakers scheduled to present at IAAPA Attractions Expo education sessions include: Ocean Park Corporation CEO Tom Mehrmann (Big Employee Rewards Start Here); former Israeli Security Agency anti-terrorism agent Michael Rozin (Facility Security Series: Recognizing Suspicious Indicators, Behavior Detection and Assessment); Palace Entertainment Director of FEC Operations Ken Withers (Guest Experiences and its Impact on Revenue); Fred Grubb, owner, Rocky Mountain Construction Group (The Rocky Mountain Coaster Story: Fast Track to Success); and TV personalities and make-up artists Marco Marco and Nix Herrera (Entertainment Design Workshop).

"Not only does this year's IAAPA Attractions Expo education program offer insight on key attractions industry topics from within our trade, it incorporates ideas taken from other businesses, too," Noland said. "Our program is rich with speakers who have found ways to apply ideas developed in other fields to the attractions industry, broadening our perspective and moving our industry forward."

In keeping with IAAPA Attractions Expo 2014's theme of "Big Starts Here," IAAPA officials have expanded the list of networking opportunities with the addition of "IAAPA Connects at New Fantasyland at Disney's Magic Kingdom Park" on Monday, Nov. 17.

IAAPA Connects will start the week off with a fantasy-filled evening at the Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World Resort, with exclusive access to New Fantasyland.

This unique networking event is designed exclusively for IAAPA Attractions Expo 2014 participants to reconnect with industry friends and form new business relationships before they step on the trade show floor Tuesday morning. Attendees will enjoy a number of attractions at New Fantasyland including the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train roller coaster, and Dumbo the Flying Elephant.

The evening will also feature Disney's nighttime spectacular "Celebrate the Magic."

"So much of the attractions industry is experiential and IAAPA Connects allows Expo participants to start the week by joining colleagues to experience Disney's latest innovations firsthand," Noland said. "As everyone begins to register for IAAPA Attractions Expo, I encourage them to plan accordingly and arrive in time to participate in this can't-miss event."

IAAPA has maintained its Thursday evening event as well. Called "IAAPA Celebrates at Universal Orlando Resort for 2014," IAAPA Attractions Expo participants will be granted access to select locations within Universal Studios Florida and Universal's Islands of Adventure with unlimited access to some rides and attractions.

Other special events include the trade show kickoff to be held once again on the trade show floor in the IAAPA Theater presented by the Wanda Group. Last year was the first year for this event to be held on the trade show floor. It is scheduled for Tuesday morning just prior to the opening of the trade show.

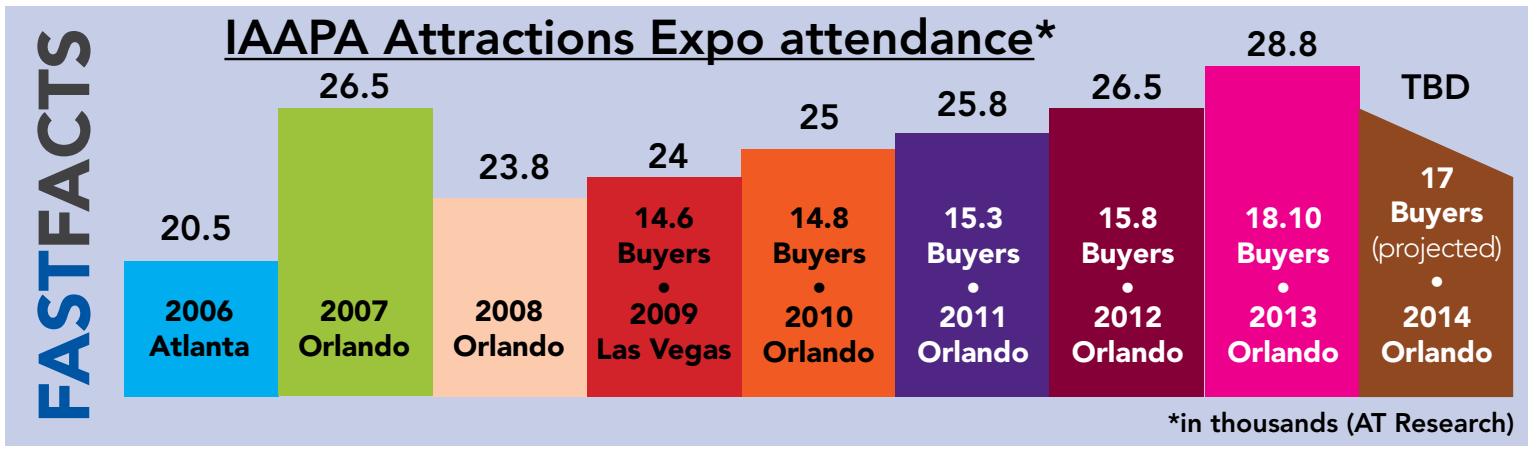
That same day, from 6-7:30 p.m., is the opening reception, again at the IAAPA Theater presented by the Wanda Group.

Wednesday morning presents the GM and Owners Breakfast with Jim Pattison, Jr., president of Ripley Entertainment, as this year's keynote speaker.

Pattison will tell the compelling story of Ripley Entertainment, stretching back to 1918 when founder Robert Ripley began to establish himself as a household name with the popular cartoon "Believe It or Not!"

There will be several charity events throughout the week that will benefit Give Kids the World.

And, as always, there will be an array of special receptions for the individual segments of the industry.



IAAPA Attractions Expo

EXHIBITOR LISTING
SEE PAGES 10-18

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IAAPA 2014 — ORLANDO

▶MAMON

Continued from page 1

What was the progress on that plan this past year and are you satisfied with the progress?

The 2013-2015 strategic plan was the basis for my work with an emphasis on the 2014 business plan, which focused on the implementation of IAAPA's new governance structure, the establishment of the North American region, and the continuation of strategic initiatives that began in 2013. The plan also included a new section highlighting the association's activities to maintain and enhance existing member benefits. I am very satisfied by the progress considering the number of changes being implemented and I look forward to the coming year.

The strategic plan goes through 2015. Have there been additions now to the plan since 2015 is so close? And, if so, has IAAPA released any of these plans?

The current strategic plan extends through 2015 and as I write these answers, IAAPA's Strategic Planning Committee under the leadership of incoming 2015 Chairman Gerardo Arteaga is hard at work crafting the 2016-2018 plan. There will be some additions, but let us wait until it is finalized. It is safe to say that it will build on the strengths of the current plan, fine tune some areas, and include additions in other areas.

Last year *AT* asked you what segment of the industry you thought IAAPA might try to reach that it hasn't so much beforehand. You said a segment that comes up in discussions is the "stand-alone, single attraction facilities." Were there exerted efforts to bring more of these attractions into the association this past year? If so, how successful has that been?

There were efforts made to bring in more stand-alone and single attraction facilities in 2014 and we expect to continue to build on those efforts in 2015. The establishment of the North American regional office will assist in our ability to penetrate the FEC, small operators, stand-alone, and single attraction markets. Similar initiatives will be introduced in the other regions.

In your opinion, what have been some of IAAPA's highs as well as some of the lows over the past year?

Instead of classifying this last year in terms of highs and lows, I prefer to look at it in terms of "where we did great" and "opportunities to grow." Definitely, starting with the record-breaking IAAPA Attractions Expo 2013 in Orlando, it has been a great year for our Expos with sold out trade show floors at Asian Attractions Expo in Beijing and Euro Attractions Show in Amsterdam. The upcoming IAAPA Attractions Expo 2014 in Orlando is boasting a sold out trade show floor. These developments bode well for the amusement park and attractions industry and its future. There are always opportunities to grow when it comes to increasing member services regionally and globally. IAAPA continues to look for ways to enhance and expand its offerings where and when appropriate. Additionally, the expos present an opportunity to increase membership by converting non-member attendees into members.

Personally, how has the past year been for you? You said last year that you wanted to gain more friends and colleagues and gain more knowledge on best practices around the world? How has that gone? What do you think your leadership leaves to IAAPA?

Personally and literally, 2014 has been a very, very busy travel year for me. Together with my wife Cynthia, we were able to gain new friends and colleagues in the industry, as well as see and experience so many wonderful places and amusement facilities around the globe. We were more than "tourists" during these travels, we were "keen observers" of all the new knowledge and best practices that we observed and can certainly bring back to our own humble facility, Enchanted Kingdom in the Philippines. I hope my leadership at IAAPA brought calm and consistency during a time of change, in the midst of some of the association's most productive years, and as we approach IAAPA's centennial in 2018! I would like to thank IAAPA and all its members for the honor and privilege they have given me of serving as their 2014 chairman of the board.

—Pam Sherborne

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Photos courtesy of Amusement Today

"Chance Rides hit it out of the park on this one!"
- Mike Thompson, Augusta, ME (800+ coasters)

"I've been on over 700 coasters and I go all over the world and this is one of the best!"
- Joel Rogers, Denver, CO (700+ coasters)

"It's a giggle-coaster pulling all kind of surprises with amazing air time and just fun."
- Ann Fealy, Watertown, MA (1000+ coasters)

"It's definitely in my top 5 coasters!"
- Jim Winslett, Houston, TX (599 coasters)

"It is my number 1 coaster!"
- Rus Ozana, Dracut, MA (678 coasters)

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ARTEAGA

Continued from page 1

I am currently leading the development of the next three-year (2016-2018) strategic plan. Mario Mamon (2014 IAAPA chairman) and I are working together to ensure continuity and a smooth transition. The long-range goals for IAAPA continue to be to help promote the industry and encourage its growth, and to provide exceptional member services around the world, such as educational programs as we are One World, One IAAPA.

Do you have any other goals already set for the coming year as chair?

Promote the establishment of the North American region.

Spread the word about safety and innovation in all aspects of our industry.

Reach out to the global FEC community to help unify this diverse group with the aim of sharing FEC-particular information as a way to grow this business segment within IAAPA. FECs are a big part of my family's business. I understand the wide variety of types of operations, but at the end of the day, we all share the same set of business fundamentals.

Looking ahead, do you see an important area of the industry that needs more attention from IAAPA?

More than areas of the industry, there are areas of the world where the opportunity exists for IAAPA to increase and engage its membership, like the Middle East and Japan. For instance, next year, the IAAPA Leadership Conference will be held in Dubai. And, in North America we recently opened the regional office implementing an approach that has been successful around the world.

It seems IAAPA's growth worldwide is booming. Would that be a correct statement? What areas of the world have seen the largest growth?

It´s absolutely correct. IAAPA is spread out all over the world, with four regional offices in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and North America, plus its headquarters near Washington, D.C. It´s important to note that our industry is very healthy and IAAPA's success in terms of membership and record-breaking trade shows is an indication of the state of the industry overall, particularly in Asia.

What would you personally like to gain over the next year as chair?

Personally, I see my chairmanship as an opportunity to give something back to IAAPA and its members, an association to which we have belonged for more than 30 years. And, I look forward to visiting and recognizing members around the world for their contribution to the industry.

—Pam Sherborne

IAAPA board of directors elects Greg Hale vice chairman

Walt Disney Parks and Resorts executive to lead IAAPA in 2017

Hale

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The board of directors of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has elected Greg Hale as the association's new second vice chairman. Hale is vice president and chief safety officer for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts worldwide. He will be IAAPA's second vice chairman in 2015, first vice chairman in 2016, and then lead the association as its chairman of the board in 2017.

"Greg Hale is passionate about the global attractions industry and about IAAPA," said Bob Rippy, chairman of the IAAPA Governance Committee that is responsible for nominating the second vice chairman to the board of directors. "His industry knowledge combined with his proven track record of leadership on safety-related issues and other complex industry matters make him an ideal second vice chairman for IAAPA."

Hale is a 26-year veteran of the Walt Disney Company. He joined Walt Disney World in 1988 as manager of electrical and electronics engineering, ride and show engineering in 1989. He was named director of facilities and attractions regulatory compliance in 1995 and promoted to vice president

See HALE, page 9

IAAPA 2014 — ORLANDO

HALE

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of design, engineering, and regulatory compliance in 1999. In 2002, he was promoted to vice president and chief safety officer for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts and leads a global team of ride design, operations, and maintenance professionals that keep Disney on the leading edge of theme park safety, accessibility for guests with disabilities, and technology advancements. Hale currently holds 63 patents around the world that have contributed to numerous innovations and inventions in the amusement industry.

Hale has been an active volunteer with IAAPA for more than 15 years, including serving on the Government Relations, New Technology Awards, Nominating, and Strategic Planning Committees. He has also been a member of the IAAPA Safety Committee including serving as its chairman for several years. He has been a speaker on industry safety-related topics at IAAPA events around the world and was a member of the IAAPA board of directors from 2003 to 2005. He received the association's Public Affairs Award in 2003 and its Outstanding Service Award in 2010. He also plays a key leadership role in the association's efforts to develop and harmonize industry safety standards around the globe, facilitating safety standards meetings in more than 16 countries in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Hale has also been the chairman of the ASTM International – F24 Subcommittee on Standards Harmonization since 2008.

Hale has been a member and past officer of the ASTM F24 Committee on Amusement Rides and Devices since 1989. He is a former member of the board of directors and currently serves as a board of delegates member for the National Safety Council. He has received the National Safety Council Distinguished Service to Safety Award, the ASTM International Dr. Richard H. "Doc" Brown Memorial Exceptional Service Award, the ASTM William T. Cavanaugh Memorial Award, and the FIRST Orlando Volunteer of the Year Award.

Hale holds a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from the University of Mississippi.

About IAAPA

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) is the premier trade association for the attractions industry worldwide.

Founded in 1918, IAAPA is the largest international trade association for permanently located amusement facilities and attractions and is dedicated to the preservation and prosperity of the amusement industry.

IAAPA represents more than 4,700 facility, supplier, and individual members from more than 90 countries. Member facilities include amusement/theme parks, water parks, attractions, family entertainment centers, arcades, zoos, aquariums, museums, science centers, and resorts.

IAAPA is a nonprofit organization. Revenues generated for the association by its involvement in trade shows and other activities are returned to the association to fund services for its members and the industry. The association's global headquarters office is in Alexandria, Virginia, United States. The association maintains regional offices in Brussels, Mexico City, Hong Kong, and Orlando, Florida, United States.

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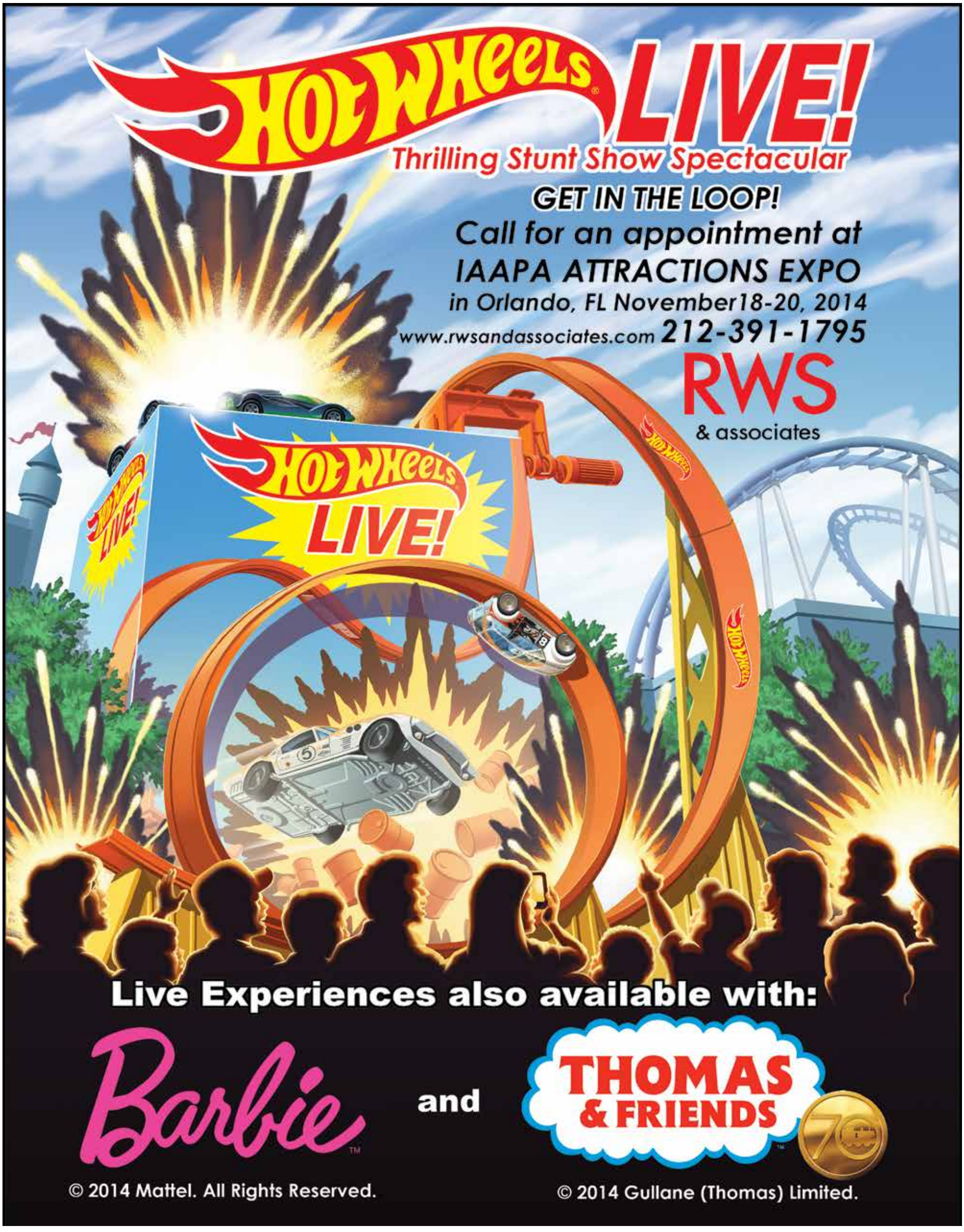
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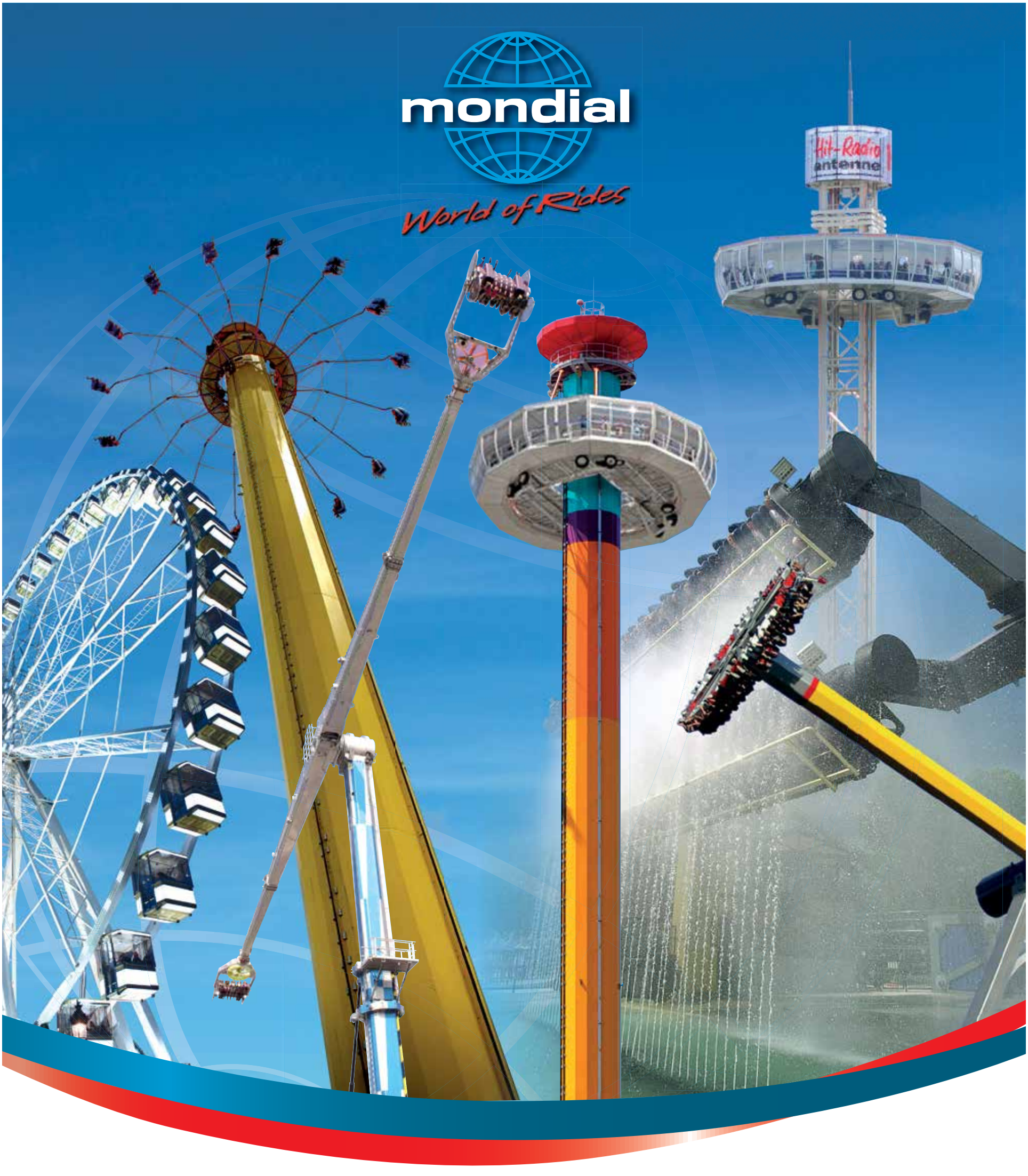

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INTERNATIONAL

U.K.'s Deamland starts restoration on historic Scenic Railway — Page 22

Meraas Holding unveils Dubai Parks & Resorts project

"Dubai Parks & Resorts will be the first entertainment destination that will simultaneously open the gates of three theme parks."
—Abdulla Al Habbai, Meraas Holding chairman

Phase one to open in 2016

STORY: *Andrew Mellor*
amellor@amusementtoday.com

DUBAI, Dubai, U.A.E. — The Dubai-based development company Meraas Holding has released the blueprint for the Dubai Parks & Resorts project that is set to take shape in Jebel Ali.

Launched under the directive of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice-president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, Dubai Parks & Resorts has been designed as a mega leisure and entertainment destination to serve the regions that are within an eight hour flying distance of Dubai.

Dubai Parks & Resorts expresses Dubai's Tourism Vision 2020, which under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum sets the guidelines for how Dubai plans to both double its annual visitor numbers from 10 million in 2012 to 20 million in 2020, as well as increase the economic contribution of the tourism sector.

Since the announcement in 2012 of the planned investment of AED 10 billion (U.S. $2.72 billion), Meraas Holding has made substantial progress towards finalizing key components and partnerships with global movie studios, construction partners and world class theme park operators for the delivery of the project.

The first phase of Dubai Parks & Resorts will comprise three theme parks — Motiongate Dubai, Bollywood Parks Dubai and Legoland Dubai. The development will also feature Riverpark, a grand entrance plaza, and Lapita, a family themed hotel. Ground work commenced on site in February this year and the first phase is scheduled for completion in 2016.

His Excellency Abdulla Al Habbai, chairman of Meraas Holding, said: "Meraas is committed to developing new concepts to build Dubai's position as one of the world's great new cities. Dubai Parks & Resorts will be the first entertainment destination that will simultaneously open the gates of three theme parks. The project will feature leading intellectual properties from elite industry players to create leisure and entertainment concepts that are expected to draw more than five million residents and tourists annually. We are confident our efforts will contribute to achieving the Dubai Tourism Vision 2020 and become the pride of our nation."

Phase 1 of Dubai Parks & Resorts (above) will include three theme parks – Motiongate Dubai, Bollywood Parks Dubai and Legoland Dubai, shown at right. Below, Dubai Parks & Resorts will represent another major investment in Dubai's entertainment offering as shown in this location map.
COURTESY MERAAS HOLDING

U.K.'s Dreamland starts restoration on historic Scenic Railway

Heritage Lottery Funding was secured to save 1920 coaster

STORY: *Andrew Mellor*
amellor@amusementtoday.com

MARGATE, England — Repair work to restore the structure of the U.K.'s oldest roller coaster, the Scenic Railway at Dreamland in Margate, Kent, began on September 15 to mark the biggest milestone to date in the project to reopen the historic amusement park.

Work to refurbish mechanical components began off-site several months ago, but work to rebuild the famous Grade 11 listed timber structure, which was seriously damaged in an arson attack in 2008, has now commenced on site.

Restoration of the 94-year-old structure is being carried out by Kent-based contractors Topbond Plc, using funding sourced by The Dreamland Trust and Thanet District Council, with the work due to be completed in time for the park's reopening in 2015.

The restoration process will be carried out in phases and will include the replacement of the foundations on which the newly fabricated timber trusses will be erected. Secondary timber structures will then be fixed to the main structure. Work will progress in a clockwise direction, beginning at the motor house.

The start of the work on the Scenic Railway means that the opening of the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides is on target for 2015 and commenting on the milestone, The Dreamland Trust Chairman Nick Laister said: "This is an incredible moment in the decade-long battle to secure the future of Dreamland and save its world-renowned historic wooden roller coaster. For me personally, for my fellow directors at The Dreamland Trust and no doubt for everybody who has helped and supported this project over the years, this is the moment we have all been waiting for."

Dreamland's Scenic Railway first opened in 1920. With a track of just under one mile, speeds of up to 40 mph and operated manually by a brakeman, it was an instant hit, carrying half a million passengers in just 13 weeks. The ride continued to be a huge draw and enjoyed a long run until an arson attack in 2008, which destroyed approximately 25 percent of the ride, the railway station, work sheds and trains. The Dreamland Trust and Thanet District Council subsequently secured Heritage Lottery Funding to restore and preserve what is an important part of British amusement park heritage.

Work has now commenced on the rebuilding of the famous Scenic Railway at the U.K.'s Dreamland park in Margate. The ride is due to begin operating once again in 2015.
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Euro Attractions Show 2014 in Amsterdam breaks all records

AMSTERDAM, the Netherlands — Over the three day period September 23-25, 2014, the Euro Attractions Show (EAS) experienced the highest number of exhibitors, the largest amount of exhibit space, and a record attendance by visitors. It is the largest trade show for the attractions industry in Europe and this edition in Amsterdam has been the most successful in the event's 11-year history.

EAS is organized by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and rotates every year over different European countries. IAAPA Vice President of European Operations, Karen Staley said: "Again Amsterdam has proven to be the right place for our show. With numerous projects going on in the northwest part of Europe and with a strong and dynamic industry in the Benelux-region, we had high expectations but these figures are really extraordinary."

Preliminary counts show that about 10,750 visitors came to the event this year. In comparison to EAS 2013 in Paris, this is an increase of 26 percent. The visitors came from more than 100 countries and about a third came from The Netherlands. This year organizers noted a substantial increase of managers from campgrounds, shopping centers, and family entertainment centers. A record 441 companies from 36 countries showcased their latest products, including roller coasters, attractions, ticket and access systems, 3-D movies, games, and much more. The growth in guest interactivity and the combinations of different technologies in one attraction are some important trends featured among the products exhibited at this year's show.

accesso signs South Korean partnership with Vision Works Global

LONDON, England — accesso Technology Group plc (AIM: ACSO), a technology solutions provider to the global attractions and leisure industry, has announced a three-year partnership with Vision Works Global to help facilitate accesso's expansion into the fast-growing South Korean theme park market place.

Vision Works Global provides consulting, deal structuring and brokering, and new business development for a range of location-based entertainment projects in South Korea. Its extensive professional contacts will enable accesso to expand its virtual queuing solutions into the country's rapidly evolving amusement park industry.

South Korea's amusement park and entertainment services market continues to attract significant interest from developers, with the top theme parks in the country enjoying attendance increases of 10 percent. The country's investment in theme parks and destination resorts is helping attract visitation from Southeast Asia and Mainland China, an area that continues to benefit from growing disposable income across the region.

"The theme park and attractions industry in South Korea has abundant opportunity for growth and expansion, and has also reached a level of maturity where operators are placing a greater emphasis on the guest experience and revenue optimization," said Tom Burnet, accesso CEO. "Our innovative technologies, particularly those that are mobile-centric, partnered with Vision Work Global's local knowledge and industry expertise, will enable us to make a considerable impact across the region."

Jin Wook Choi, CEO of Vision Works Global, understands the difference accesso's solutions make in theme park customer experience and the effect they have on driving revenue.

"The monetization of queue lines is revolutionary for our clients' bottom-line," said Choi. "We noticed the trend of attractions taking pain staking efforts during the planning and design phase to make sure they accommodate secondary entrances for front-of-the-line access. This is one of the primary reasons we're excited to partner with accesso."

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WATER PARKS & RESORTS

Hauled water kept Castaway Cove in Wichita Falls, Texas, alive this summer season — Page 26

Isla Magica's new water park continues a popular trend

STORY: *Andrew Mellor*
amellor@amusementtoday.com

SEVILLE, Spain — Having kick started a new focus on water park attractions last year with the expansion of its Avonturenpark in Hellendoorn, the Netherlands, the Looping Group has this year again utilized the continued popularity of water parks to expand its Isla Magica theme park in Spain.

As was the case at Avonturenpark, the company again partnered with Polin Waterparks and Pool Systems for the expansion of the Spanish park, which it acquired in 2013. In operation since 1997, the park is divided into seven different themes which represent various periods in Spanish history. At the time of the takeover, however, it was reportedly in danger of closing and one of the ways the group felt it could be revitalized was through the addition of a waterpark.

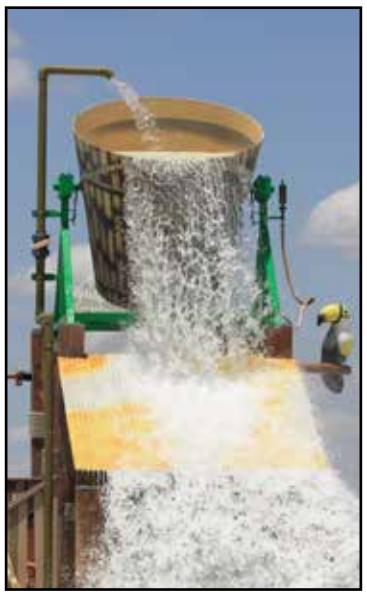
At Avonturenpark the

▸ **See MAGICA, page 26**

In Seville, Spain, Isla Magica's new water park (above) covers an area of over 215,000 square feet (20,000 square meters). The park features many signature slides from Turkey-based Polin Waterparks & Pool Systems, as seen in the bottom two photos. COURTESY POLIN/ISLA MAGICA

Hauled water kept Castaway Cove, Wichita Falls, Texas, open in 2014

City spent just under $70,000 to keep park open



The water still poured this summer at Castaway Cove in Wichita Falls, Texas, thanks to AMG spending $70,000 to haul well water. The city is in Drought Disaster Stage 4 conditions. AT FILE

WICHITA FALLS, Texas — Officials of the city of Wichita Falls announced they would haul well water at the beginning of the 2014 season to keep the city-owned Castaway Cove Water Park open and operating.

And, with few additional challenges, 2014 went well.

"But, hopefully it will rain this winter," said Kent Lemasters, president and CEO, AquaticAmusement Management Group (AMG), the company that manages the water park for the city.

It was estimated that it would take between 6,000 and 9,000 gallons of well water per day at a cost of approximately $70,000 to keep things going. That dollar figure not only included the hauling of the water, but also included such additional components like pumps and storage tanks.

During the first week of October, Lemasters said he felt they came just under that estimated figure.

"It was expensive but it was better than closing the park down," Lemasters said.

Closing the park would have caused a loss of thousands of dollars to the city and would have sent many residents to look for summer jobs elsewhere.

Lemasters understands that it is difficult for those outside of the industry to understand that water parks use a lot less water than they expect. Once the pools are full, the only water usage comes from topping off the pools to make up for water loss due to splash-outs and evaporation.

Wichita Falls remains in Drought Disaster Stage 4.

—Pam Sherborne

▶MAGICA

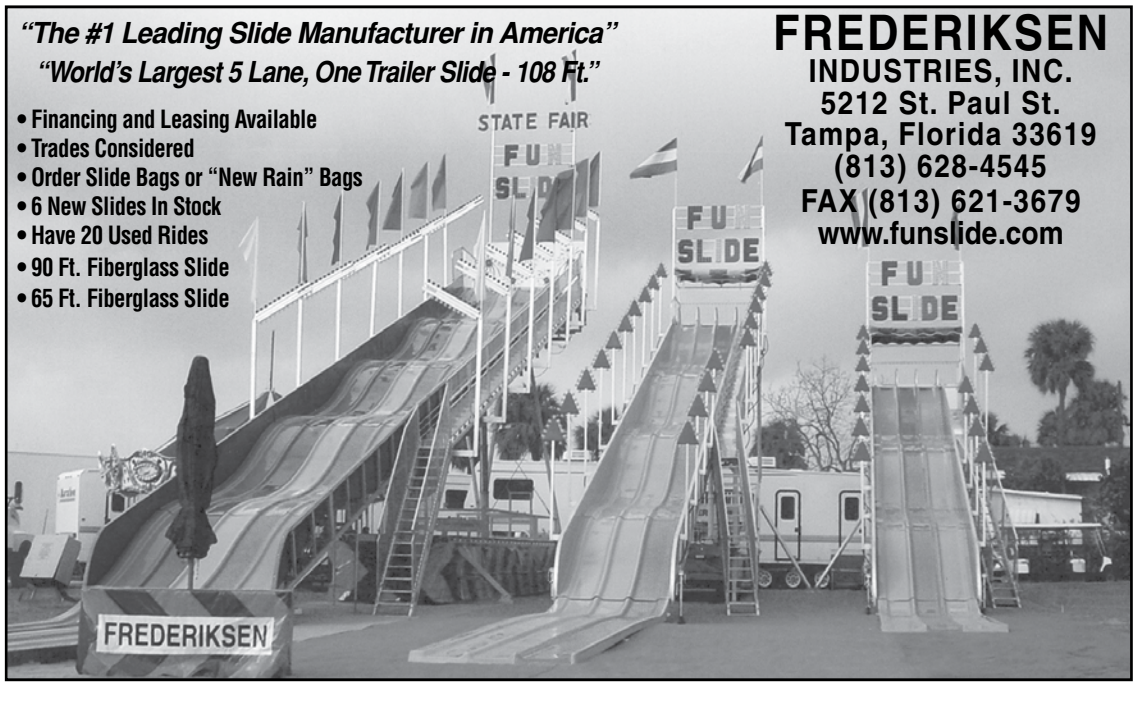
Continued from page 25

company added the Aquaventura Slidepark, while at Isla Magica it made the decision to add more than standard waterslides. The new Aqua Magica water park therefore features several of Polin's signature rides designed to provide guests with the opportunity to challenge one another and themselves by upping the adrenaline factor.

"We wanted to invest in attractions that would not only excite local residents and entice them to come back many times over the summer season but that would also intrigue visitors from outside the area," says Looping Group CEO Laurent Bruloy. "We know that these waterslides will help build guest loyalty because they are unique and thrilling. Plus, we'll provide an actual beach experience with our wave pool in an area of Spain that is far from the coast. In essence we're offering an experience that can't be found anywhere else in Seville."

All of the slides feature Polin's exclusive resin-transfer molding (RTM) manufacturing technology and are set within the parameters of the park's 450 meters (1,476 foot) long leisure river. They include a Racer Twin Hybrid; Black Hole + Rafting Slide combination; Rafting Slide + Flying Boats; Aquatube + Giant Body Slide combination; Freefall, Multisurf and B6 waterplay structure.

The new water park, which is more than 215,000 square feet (20,000 square meters) in size, made its debut in July and can accommodate approximately 4,000 people daily.



Crystal Water World, Antalya - TURKEY

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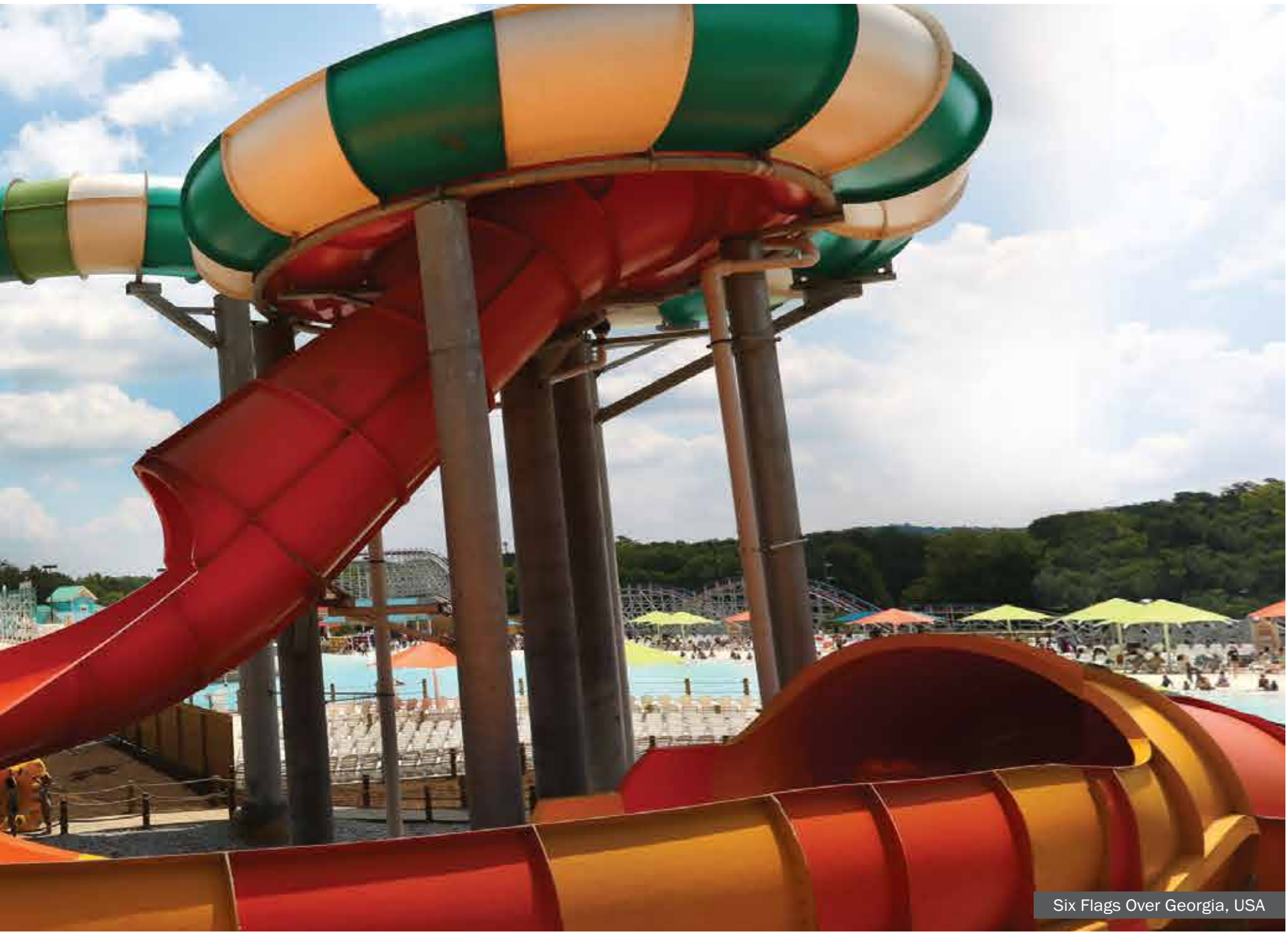

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NEWSSPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert, jseifert@amusementtoday.com

In May, **Lotte World,** Seoul, Korea, officially opened the first phase of a three-phased Polynesian themed water park. This project boasts a 120,000 square-meter (29.7-acre) water park filled with impressive waterslides, wave pools and interactive play structures.

In the first four months of operation, Lotte World has seen daily water park attendance records of 18,000 guests per day. As voted by water park visitors, Korea's largest **Surf Wave Pool**, the third largest in the world, is a definite guest favorite while Korea's largest **Abyss** has been chosen by guests as the most thrilling ride.

Featuring many more firsts for Korea, visitors to Lotte World will get to enjoy Korea's largest **Aqua-Play** structure towering was well as Korea's first indoor **Rattler**.

Although the exact completion date of the third phase of the water park is not confirmed, there are many new and exciting water park experiences to be discovered in the coming seasons. **WhiteWater** is the exclusive supplier to Lotte World and will continue to supply its quality products throughout the next phases.

•

Canton, Texas-based **Splash Kingdom**, operator of three water parks in Texas and one in nearby Shreveport, La., has purchased a fifth park. **Splash Amarillo**, previously owned by **Paul Johnson**, was sold to Splash Kingdom in October. Although the purchase price was not disclosed, the appraised value of the property is listed as $277,315 — far below the $3.7 million the park cost to build in 2000 when it opened as **FireWater Water Park**. The original owners went through bankruptcies and reorganizations before finally selling the park to Johnson in 2003. Specific details have not been released but Splash Kingdom has disclosed that the company plans to upgrade and expand the facility, improving the pools, restaurants and seating areas. The park is scheduled to re-open next year on Memorial Day weekend.

•

Lake Tobesofkee, Georgia, could be home to a new water park as early as June of next year. Macon-Bibb County commissioners approved the use of bond money from a 2013 issue by the **Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority** to spend $248,000 for road and utility upgrades that led to the site of the proposed park. **Spirit of America The Park and Development, LLC** has agreed to invest $2.7 million in the water park. The development company was granted a 20-year lease that calls for payments of just $1 per year until 2018, after which the lease will be based on a percentage the park's gross revenue — 1 percent for years four through six, then 1.5 percent for the remainder of the term.

Initial plans call for a year-round pool, children's splash pool, lazy river, wave pool, two water slides at least 250 feet long as well as beach and concession areas. Lake Tobesofkee is about one hour Southeast of Atlanta.

•

Canada's **Vortex Aquatic Structures International**, a world leader in aquatic play solutions, has announced the expansion of its manufacturing facility and an investment in Research & Development. The expansion will add almost 20,000 square feet (44 percent) to Vortex's manufacturing facility and includes a 2400-square-foot testing pool enabling the Montreal based company to enhance innovation and provide faster turn-around times. Ground breaking was held September 25, with plans to complete construction by early 2015.

•

Aquatic safety and risk management experts, **Ellis & Associates** have launched **Ellis Educational Services** to provide educational solutions to water park facilities. Accredited courses are available online, in a traditional classroom, and as a combination of both. All courses are designed using quality education principles, technology capabilities that allows them to be viewed on any mobile device, and with the flexibility to be delivered in the manner that best meets the needs of aquatic facilities owners and operators. All training is tracked, delivered, and managed in E&A's Learning Management System, a software service that creates environmentally friendly, paper-free processes that are easy to organize, manage, and monitor; bringing technology to the mobile world. A full list of course offerings for 2015 can be found on the jellis.com website.

•

Waldameer Park in Erie, Pa., started construction in October on what is being billed as one of the largest wave pools in the tri-state area (Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York). The park is in the midst of one of the largest expansions in its history, having committed $25 million over the next five years. Specific information concerning the size of the wave pool has yet be released but it is expected to have the capacity to hold 1,000 guests. Park President **Steve Gorman** confirmed that pool construction will include pipes for other eventual water park additions. A master plan posted to the park's Facebook page shows a new children's waterplay area and what appears to be a **ProSlide** bowl slide added to an existing slide tower. Immediate plans call for new lockers and the purchase of more than 1,000 lounge chairs.

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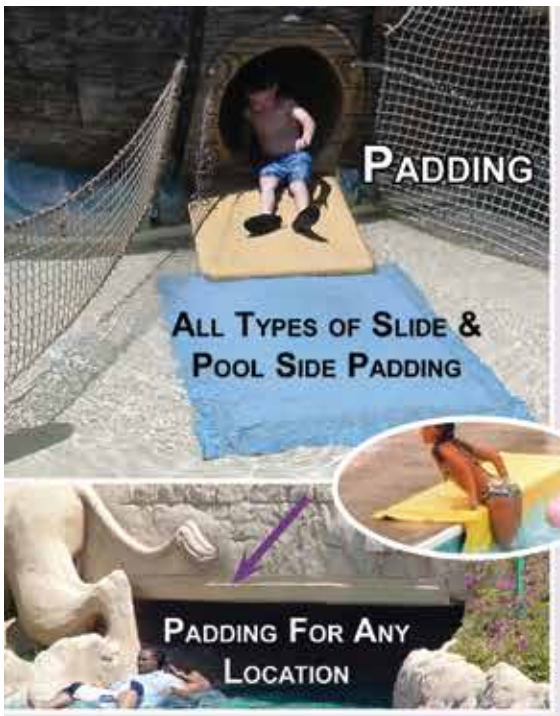

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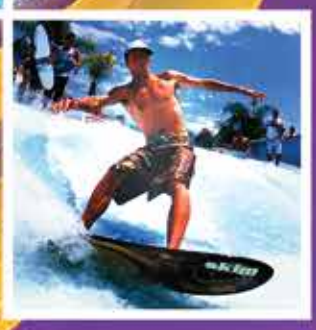

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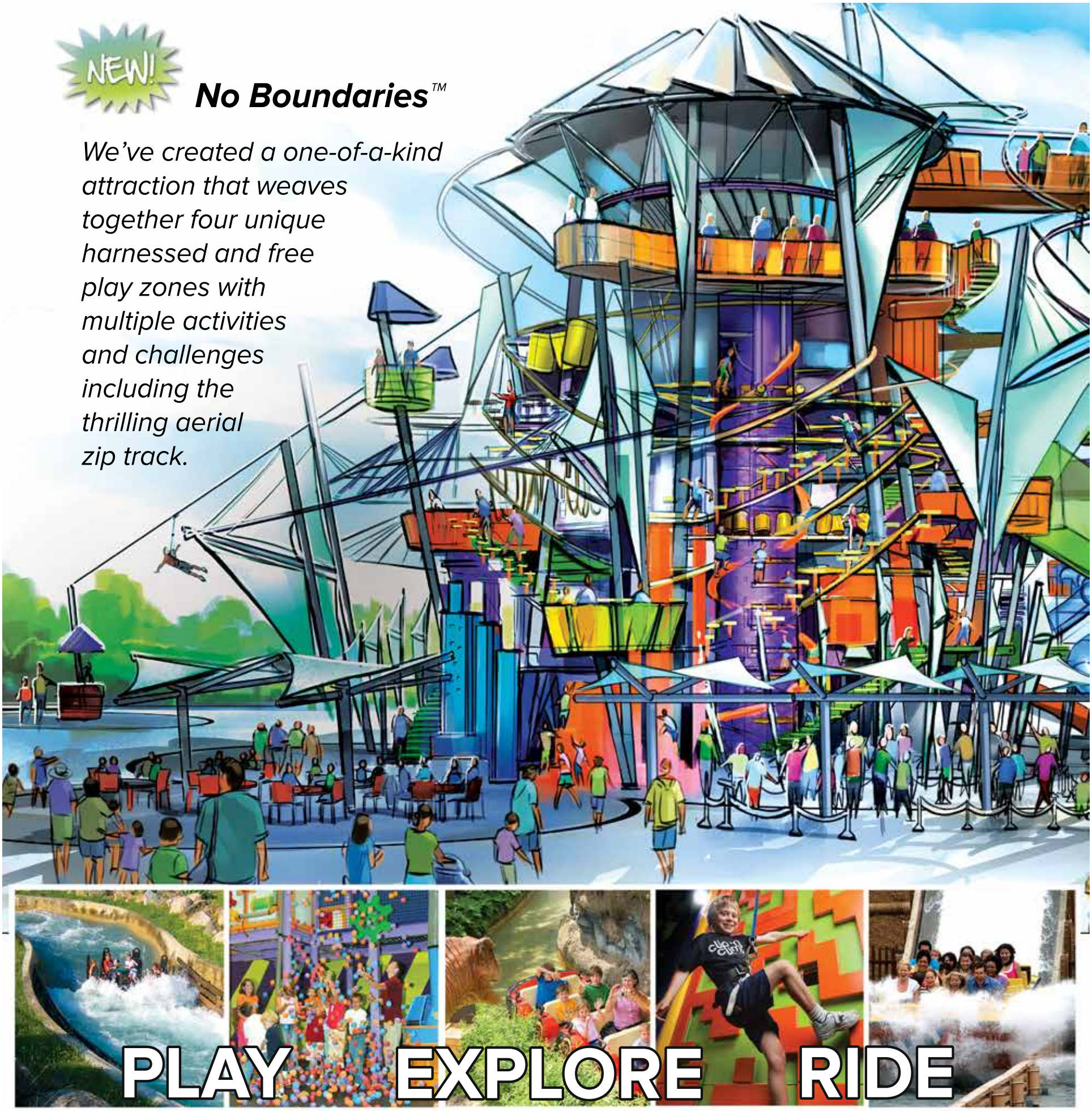

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PARKS & CARNIVALS

Cedar Point transforming Mantis, rehabbing Hotel Breakers — Page 36 / Carnival News — Pages 40-42

Falcon's Fury thrills guests at Busch Gardens Tampa

TAMPA, Fla. — Following a bit of fine tuning, Busch Gardens Tampa finally unleashed its newest attraction, Falcon's Fury. Topping out at an intimidating 335 feet, the new ride takes the record as North America's tallest freestanding drop tower. After weeks of thrilling lucky guests during a soft opening, Falcon's Fury officially opened to the public on Sept. 2.

Supplied by IntaRide, Falcon's Fury was originally slated to take flight earlier this spring. Mark Rose, vice president of Design and Engineering for Busch Gardens Tampa, explains that it was not a safety issue with the ride but rather one of reliability that prevented it from opening on time.

Falcon's Fury is located in the newly renovated and renamed Pantopia, formerly Timbuktu. Pantopia features an updated theme, paint scheme, decor, restaurant, and shop. But it's clear that Falcon's Fury is the star attraction of the new area.

And be warned: Falcon's Fury is hardly your run-of-the-mill drop tower. Oh no. This bird of prey has a devious surprise awaiting riders once they reach the top. After a quick 60-second ascent, the circular gondola in which 32 riders are secured, pauses at the crest. Then, it happens: the seats smoothly pivot forward a full 90 degrees in midair, placing riders in a face-down dive position. Before they can react, the gondola is suddenly released and they find themselves plummeting at 60 mph straight down from 33 stories in the air. A fail-safe magnetic braking system slows and then stops the gondola back at its starting point.

Amusement Today caught up with Busch Gardens Tampa President Jim Dean after the ride's opening to see how guests were reacting to the park's newest thriller. "Falcon's Fury has set the standard for thrill rides in Florida, and we couldn't be more excited at guests' reactions to North America's tallest freestanding drop tower," said Dean. "This is a one-of-a-kind attraction that guests from across the globe are coming to experience, and it continues to deliver the thrills that Busch Gardens Tampa has become known for."

For those who need to muster courage before tackling Falcon's Fury, they can do so at nearby Twisted Tails Pretzels, home of the popular Pretzel Bacon Fury – a pretzel twisted around bacon.

Falcon's Fury is currently scaring the daylights out of guests daily.

—Scott Rutherford

FAST FACTS

Name/Park
Falcon's Fury/
Busch Gardens Tampa,
Tampa, Fa.

Type
Drop tower ride

Height/Speed
335 feet/60 mph

Elements
Seats pivot 90 degrees in midair, placing riders in a face-down dive position before the gondola releases to begin freefall

Ride Vehicle
32-seat ring gondola

Design/Engineering
IntaRide

Opened
September 2, 2014

Busch Gardens Tampa's new Falcon's Fury has been thrilling riders since early September. Topping out at 335 feet, the new ride takes the record as North America's tallest freestanding drop tower.
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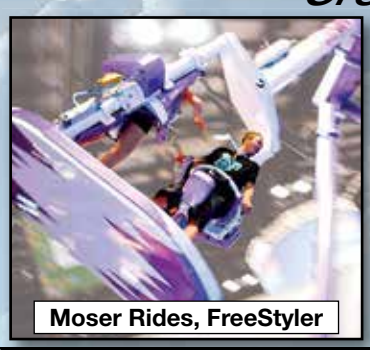
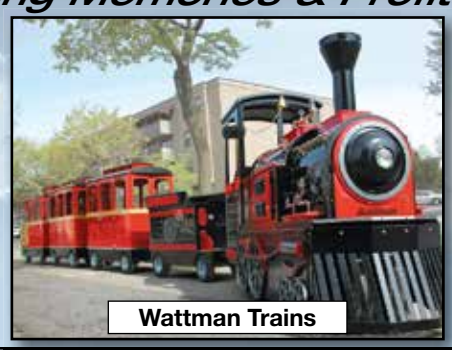

Moser Rides, FreeStyler


Wattman Trains

abc rides, Flume

Cedar Point transforming Mantis, rehabbing Hotel Breakers

▶SEE RELATED PHOTO...PAGE 43

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Point will introduce a new roller coaster experience when it unleashes Rougarou in the spring of 2015.

Taking its name from a werewolf-like creature in French folklore, Rougarou [roo-guh-roo] feeds on screams and lurks in and around the swampy lagoon at the center of the park, shared with other coasters like Iron Dragon and Top Thrill Dragster.

Rougarou's floorless trains will take riders on a fun journey at speeds reaching 60 mph as their feet dangle just inches above the track. The trains will be manufactured by Bolliger & Mabillard, Monthey, Switzerland, the same team behind rides like Raptor and GateKeeper, and will transform the ride experience dramatically while utilizing the structure and track of the former Mantis stand-up coaster.

Rougarou's floorless trains will drop 137 feet at a 52-degree angle to within inches above the water before whipping through a 119-foot-tall vertical loop. The 3,900-foot-long course contains three additional inversions as well as plenty of other twists and turns that will be accentuated by the coaster's sleek new lower-to-track rolling stock.

Baynum Painting is supplying the new new paint scheme. See related photo page 43.

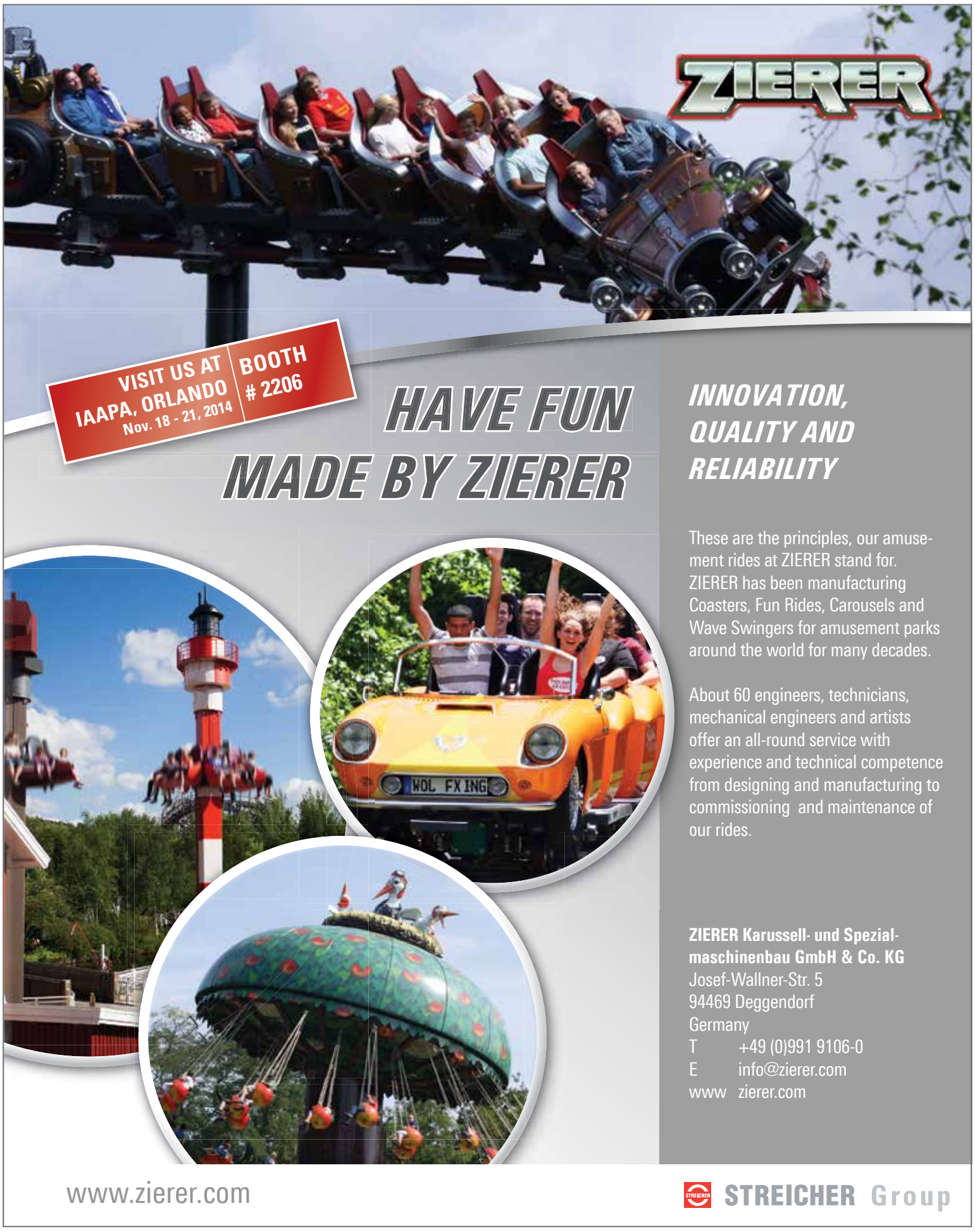
"Rougarou is going to be a fantastic addition to our coaster lineup and our guests are going to love it," said Jason McClure, vice president and general manager of Cedar Point.

Hotel Breakers update

The 2015 season will also mark the debut of the newly-renovated Hotel Breakers, which originally opened its doors in 1905 as the "largest and greatest hotel on the Great Lakes." Located along the mile-long Cedar Point Beach, Hotel Breakers will complete its two-year transformation into an enhanced resort destination. Along with a new exterior, the modernized hotel will have a new entrance portal, classic interior finishes, newly-furnished and remodeled rooms with LCD TV's, new furniture, bedding and décor, and many other amenities and offerings. Additional enhancements include a new Starbucks and the Surf Lounge bar inside the famous rotunda, widened exterior green space with panoramic views of Lake Erie and an outdoor water play area with zero depth entry and splash features.

"We want to provide a well-rounded and complete vacation experience for our guests, and the enhancements at the Hotel Breakers will help them have just that," said McClure. "It will have a fun and fresh feel, is steps away from the park and it's a great place to start new family traditions."

Other amenities include two pools and Jacuzzis, access to the Cedar Point Beach and Boardwalk, a gift shop, arcade, exercise room, three restaurants, Early Entry (access to some of the biggest rides and coasters before the park opens to the general public), discounted Cedar Point admission tickets, complimentary Wi-Fi and the comfort and convenience of staying right next to the rides and roller coasters of Cedar Point.



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Disneyland Resort cast members made sure **Larry** and **Kelcie Ragsdale** were transported to the Disney Fairytale Wedding of their dreams in Cinderella's crystal coach, thanks in part to the cast members who are part of the **CastABLE** diversity resource group (DRG). These cast members worked with Disneyland Resort teams to customize the coach, allowing a portable lift system to transfer guests with mobility disabilities into the coach. Cast members in CastABLE often work with Disney designers and technicians to ensure accessibility for guests with mobility disabilities.

•

Silver Dollar City and the city of Branson partnered with **Roller Coaster Race**, a new national endurance running series working with theme and amusement parks across the country to create family destination travel events that encouraged fitness and entertainment for a half-marathon, 5k, kids mile and Roller Coaster Ride taking place at both the theme park and **Branson Landing** this past October. The event aims to encourage fitness and entertainment for the whole family by holding professional, United States of America Track and Field-sanctioned running events for all skills and ages in conjunction with the completely unique roller coaster event, Roller Coaster Race.

•

The **Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex** celebrated the one-year anniversary of the $100-million **Space Shuttle Atlantis** attraction with **Atlantis Astronaut Adventure** on Oct. 9 by featuring 12 NASA astronauts, all of whom flew on the historic orbiter. The 12 Atlantis astronauts participated in a first-of-its-kind **Lunch with an Astronaut**. Visitor Complex guests who purchased special Lunch with an Astronaut tickets had one of the astronauts sitting at their table and receive a space shuttle keepsake signed by that astronaut and a Kodak photo with the astronaut as well. The astronauts were also featured throughout the day in **Astronaut Encounter at the Visitor Complex**. Each astronaut gave a 30-minute "Mini Mission Recap" highlighting their missions aboard Atlantis.

•

The **South Carolina Aquarium** is planning a $5 million expansion to create a larger sea turtle hospital and exhibit to allow visitors to better see how it cares for the turtles. The expanded hospital will include more tanks, treatment equipment and laboratory space. The aquarium began offering twice-a-day tours of its smaller, behind-the-scenes hospital last year and generally the tours sell out. Since the aquarium opened in 2000, more than 140 sea turtles have been treated and released from its hospital.

•

The **International Storytelling Center** and **Dollywood's DreamMore Resort** has announced they will join forces in the coming year to highlight the art of storytelling at Dollywood's newest destination in the Great Smoky Mountains. The announcement coincided with the International Storytelling Center's flagship event, the **National Storytelling Festival**, held Oct. 3-5 in Jonesborough, Tenn. In addition to sponsoring the festival's Family Tent on Oct. 3, the DreamMore Resort will help hundreds of schoolchildren in the region attend the event as sponsor of the Festival's School Day. Opening next summer, Dollywood's DreamMore Resort is inspired by **Dolly Parton's** warm childhood memories of life growing up in the Smokies and telling stories on her family's front porch.

•

Merlin Entertainments' global HR team have won the **Large Business Award** in the **Women 1st Shine Awards 2014**. Women 1st's goal is to have one female candidate on the long list for every board or executive team position by 2017. A 2009 study found that although women make up around 60 percent of the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism workforce, they account for only six percent of board-level directors. The Women 1st Shine Awards recognize employers who go the extra mile to support women's career development in the hospitality, tourism, leisure, travel, passenger transport and retail industries.

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The Big E's 1,498,605 guests set new attendance mark

Special exhibit on 1964-65 New York World's Fair was a hit with fairgoers

STORY: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — On the verge of The Big E's 100th anniversary, event officials were extremely pleased with the record number of fairgoers that visited the grounds during its 2014 edition held Sept. 12-28.

This year's attendance tally was 1,498,605, breaking the existing record set last year of 1,481,917.

The Big E recorded four single day records with one of those, Saturday, Sept. 20, being the hightest single day attendance in the history of the fair coming in with 170,612. The other three records set the highest single day for that day of the fair. They were: Friday, Sept. 26, with 95,866; Wednesday, Sept. 24, with 89,068; and Friday, Sept. 12, with 71,019.

The Big E, West Springfield, Mass., set a new all-time attendance this year when it ran Sept. 12-28. Pictured at the administration office during its run are, from left, Chairman of the Board, Eastern States Exposition, Donald Chase, President Eugene Cassidy and Director of Sales Greg Chiecko.
COURTESY NEAAPA/RON GUSTAFSON

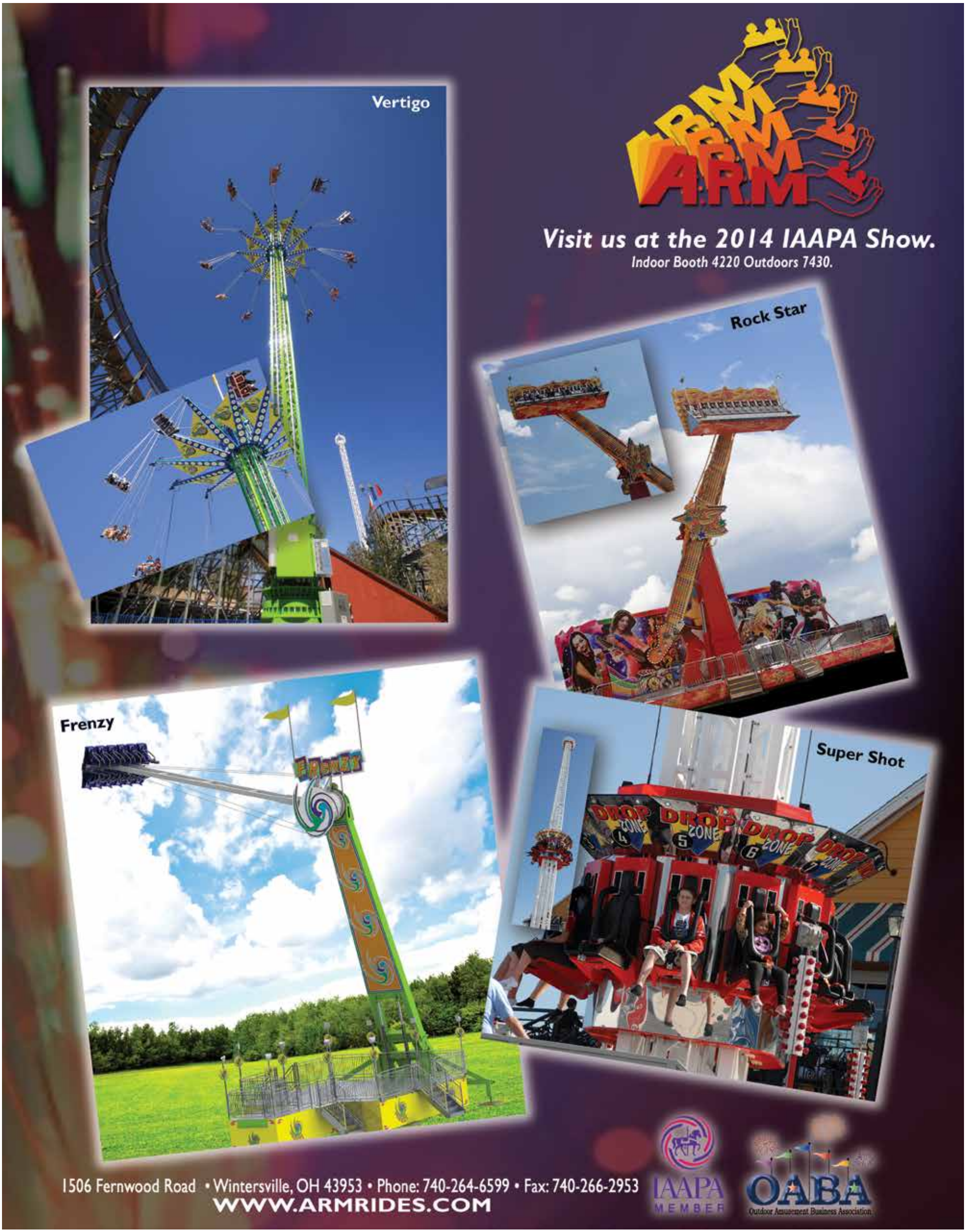
"We are thrilled to report a new all-time attendance record and we are grateful for the support we receive from the agriculture community of North America and attendees from all of New England and beyond," said The Big E's Eugene Cassidy, president and chief executive officer. "We look forward to setting new records in the future as we begin planning for our 2015 Big E and our centennial celebration in 2016."

Weather was a contributing factor for the large turnout this year. It cooperated with only two days that presented scattered showers, and one other day that threatened but showers never came to fruition. Temperatures remained warm and fall like.

The Big E offered a variety of special exhibits, attractions, daily parades, a midway full

▸ See THE BIG E, page 42

North American Midway Entertainment supplied The Big E midway with more than 50 rides at this year's fair including this Giant Wheel, manufactured by Chance Rides.
COURTESY NEAAPA/RON GUSTAFSON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A record number of fairgoers turned out for the 2014 The Big E, West Springfield, Mass. Contributing to the turnout is The Big E's abundance of attractions and entertainment such as daily parades, a scene from which is shown here.
COURTESY NEAAPA/RON GUSTAFSON

THE BIG E

Continued from page 40

of rides and attractions, an abundance of food, and headline musical entertainment.

A special exhibit, the 1964-65 New York World's Fair exhibit, featured a celebration of the 50th anniversary of one of the most historical events to ever happen in the country. The special exhibit featured a scale recreation of the Unisphere, the symbol of the fair, an original Mold-A-Rama machine that vended Big E souvenirs and a large amount of Ford's World's Fair memorabilia, including a model of the Ford Pavilion and an authentic 1965 Ford Mustang.

A popular exhibit back this year featured the winners of the fair's ninth annual Big E Northeast Gold Wine Competition and seventh annual Big E Gold Medal Cheese Competition. Fairgoers could sample and purchase the products.

North American Midway Entertainment was back this year supplying the midway with over 50 rides. New to the list of rides was N.A.M.E.'s Mach 3 amusement ride, manufactured by KMG. Other rides included the Spin Out, also manufactured by KMG; Fireball, by Larson International; and Cliff Hanger, by Battech Enterprises LLC. Kiddieland was full of rides and attractions for the youngest visitors.

The number of new food vendors and new foods gave fairgoers a multitude of food options. New vendors included: Frigo's, which served Panini and giant one-pound meatballs; Pasticceria Italia, offering gelato, Apollo pastries, expresso and cappuccino; and the Burgundy Brook Café, which sold popular French meat pies, Danish and breads.

The Italian Pavilion changed its name and menu options, operating as Clemenza's: A Little Taste of Italy. The sit-down dining destination featured a full Italian menu.

Matunuck Oyster Bar, of South Kingston, Rhode Island, offered a full menu of fresh seafood straight from their farm.

New foods introduced by tried and true vendors included: MooLicious, featuring Smash-A-Pie, a blend of pie and soft serve ice cream; the New England Craft Beer Pub which created Beer-A-Misu, a take on an Italian specialty dessert, tiramisu, made with a chocolate fudge cake soaked in stout beer and topped with chocolate or raspberry sauce, a creamy topping and chocolate sprinkles; and Pop 'n Fresh that introduced fried dough with maple syrup and bacon and deep fried banana balls.

Other new foods included a Pulled Pork Sundae from The Pork Palace, the Hot Dog Taco from Crow's Nest and more deep fried delights from Coffee Break — Red Velvet Oreos, S'mores on a Stick and Deep Fried Nutella & Banana Sandwiches.

There were 50,000 Cream Puffs and 50,000 Big Eclairs consumed from Hot Diggid-E The Big E Cream Puff Bakery.

The agricultural portion of the fair was also very successful. Exhibitors showed 822 dairy cattle, 475 beef cattle, 1,415 sheep, 75 sheepdogs, 126 llamas and 55 alpacas. Hundreds of 4-H and FFA youth participated and 1,273 chicks were hatched in Farm-A-Rama.

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BUSINESS & CLASSIFIEDS

MarketWatch — Page 44 / Obituaries — Page 46 / AIMS News — Page 48 / CLASSIFIED — Page 55

Baynum Painting transforming Cedar Point's Rougarou coaster

Baynum Painting, based in Covington, Kentucky, is currently hard at work at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio transforming the paint colors of the B&M-built Mantis into next season's Rougarou. Baynum's crew will be on site for a total of six weeks to apply the new 2-tone color scheme with PPG's PSX-700 product. When completed it is estimated Baynum's crew will have hand rolled more than 500 gallons of paint. COURTESY BAYNUM PAINTING

Palace Entertainment sells 14 properties to Al Weber-led Apex Parks Group

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Festival Fun Parks, LLC dba Palace Entertainment recently announced that it has completed the sale of 14 family entertainment centers and one water park to Apex Parks Group.

The 14 FECs sold include park locations of Boomers!, Malibu Grand Prix, Mountasia, and SpeedZone. All four brands focus on family fun that is close to home.

Al Weber, former CEO of Palace Entertainment and Chief Operating Officer of Six Flags Theme Parks, will serve as CEO of Apex Parks Group in addition to his role as a Broad Sky operating partner. Joining Weber on the executive team are Chief Financial Officer Doug Honey and Senior Vice President of Parks Gregg Borman, both industry veterans.

The FECs that have been transitioned to the buying company, Apex Parks Group include: Boomers! Boca Raton, Fla., El Cajon, Calif., Fountain Valley, Calif., Fresno, Calif., Irvine, Calif., Livermore, Calif., Modesto, Calif., San Diego, Calif., Santa Maria, Calif., and Upland, Calif.; Malibu Grand Prix San Antonio, Texas; Mountasia Houston, Texas; and SpeedZone Dallas, Texas and Los Angeles, Calif.

Big Kahuna's Water Park in Destin, Florida, also included in the sale, will be the sole water park for Apex.

"It is Palace's plan to focus on gated parks in key markets. With the sale of these parks, we look to strengthen our geographical diversity and grow through the acquisition of more gated attractions in the future. We wish to thank our employees for their outstanding efforts over the years and we wish them well," said Fernando Eiroa, Palace Entertainment's President and CEO.

Al Weber, CEO of Apex Parks Group, added: "We are thrilled to be associated with this collection of parks and the dedicated employee base. I am excited about the opportunity to invest in the locations and deliver on Apex's commitment to providing a family-friendly experience and facilitating memories that our guests will treasure for years to come. We look forward to aggressively growing Apex, both organically and through acquisitions."

Tyler Zachem, CEO and Founding Partner of Broad Sky Partners, commented, "We are thrilled with the opportunity to partner with Al Weber and Edgewater. Apex Parks Group fits solidly within our investment framework: investing in sectors we know, partnering with best-in-class executives, and building platforms that support enhanced growth and acquisition opportunities. We believe our collective experience in the leisure/entertainment category will allow us to successfully take APEX to the next level."

Dave Tolmie, a Partner with Edgewater, commented, "We believe the family entertainment center sector is an attractive space delivering great entertainment value and growth opportunity. We are pleased to partner with Al Weber and his team."

Palace Entertainment reportedly has about $300 million in annual revenue. It was acquired by Spain's Parques Reunidos SA in 2007 for $330 million.

apexparksgroup.com
broadskypartners.com
edgewaterfunds.com

FAST FACTS

Company Info
Apex Parks Group
27061 Aliso Creek Road, Suite 100
Aliso Viejo, Calif. 92656
(949) 349-8473 office

Executive Team
Al Weber, CEO
Doug Honey, CFO
Gregg Borman, SVP of parks

Parks acquired from Palace Entertainment
Boomers!
Boca Raton, Fla.
El Cajon, Calif.
Fountain Valley, Calif.
Fresno, Calif.
Irvine, Calif.
Livermore, Calif.
Modesto, Calif.
San Diego, Calif.
Santa Maria, Calif.
Upland, Calif.
Malibu Grand Prix
San Antonio, Texas
Mountasia
Houston, Texas
SpeedZone
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Los Angeles, Calif.
Big Kahuna's Water Park
Destin, Fla.

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MARKETWATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 10/8/14	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
Apollo Global Management (Great Wolf Resorts)	APO	NYSE	23.76	36.51	22.41
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	30.40	36.08	24.54
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	336.50	340.60	3.20
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	47.07	55.76	42.66
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	54.77	57.49	44.09
	CMCSK	NASDAQ	54.44	57.16	42.78
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	88.11	91.20	63.10
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1084.00	1270.00	716.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.24	2.27	1.02
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	11.60	13.70	11.15
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	21.97	28.75	18.40
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	18.82	35.30	17.83
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	5.55	6.42	4.30
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	35.50	43.19	31.86
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	3008.00	3216.00	2880.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	6.86	8.44	6.28

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Excange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

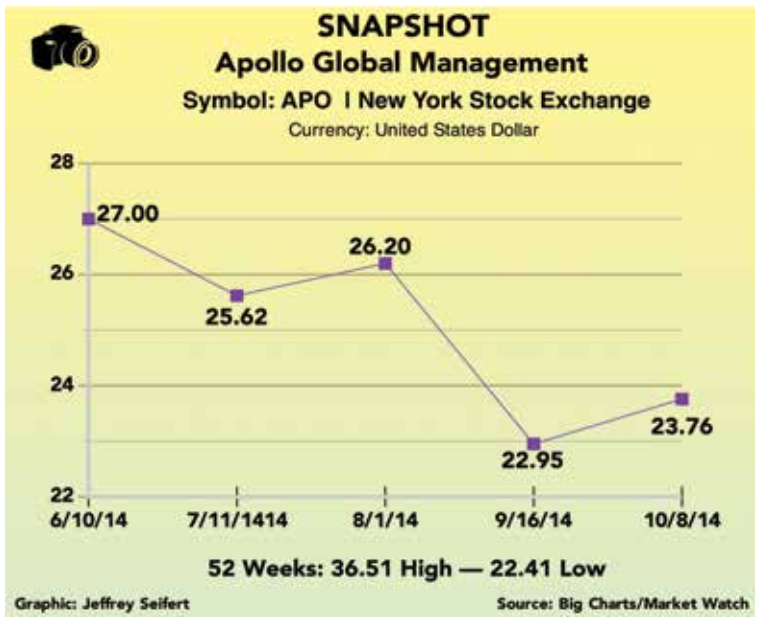
—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 10/06/14	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	$3.755	- $0.153
Midwest	$3.670	- $0.206
Gulf Coast	$3.662	- $0.143
Mountain	$3.787	- $0.128
West Coast	$3.855	- $0.081
California	$3.998	- $0.152

CURRENCY

On 10/08/14 $1 USD =	
0.7915	EURO
0.6220	GBP (British Pound)
108.57	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9594	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.1381	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.1164	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Michael Goss acquires Austin, Texas FEC

AUSTIN, Texas — **Austin's Park & Pizza Experiences**, based in Austin, Texas, is now under local ownership for the first time since the FEC opened in 2003.

Michael Goss, a two-year manager at the 21-acre, 50,000 square foot entertainment complex, led the acquisition of the business from an out-of-state owner.

Under the direction of Goss, the FEC has seen attendance increase more than 20 percent, birthday parties now reaching more than 3,000 annual groups and an increase of staff positions that now tops more than 100 full and part time staff members.

"The ownership change is significant because Austin is a community that takes a lot of pride in the abundance of unique, locally-owned businesses," says Goss, who will remain the park's onsite operator in addition to his new duties as president and owner. "And I in turn take a lot of pride in leading our team to deliver the most superior and affordable family entertainment experience in the Central Texas market. I think it means a lot to our customers to know that the operator of the park is also one of the owners – that I'm on the premises all the time, hands on with daily operations, and constantly looking to enhance their experience.

"We call ourselves 'the more place' because we believe we offer an exceptional entertainment destination for our guests – more fun, superior value, more options," he continues. "We plan to continue that theme moving forward, by installing more rides and attractions, continuing to evolve our menu, adding more jobs, training future team members, and building new partnerships with the business and non-profit communities."

"Austin's Park & Pizza Experience has plenty of land on which to expand, ambitious ideas, and a creative vision," he adds. "I see nothing but continued growth — and tons of fun — for the park's future."

Sesame Place introduces transferable season pass

LANGHORNE, Pa. — **Sesame Place** has introduced an all-new **Transferable Season Pass** that is available for purchase in conjunction with a 2015 Sesame, Big Bird or Super Grover Season Pass. Sesame Place 2015 Season Passes are currently available for purchase and are valid for the rest of the 2014 season plus the full 2015 season including the annual Very Furry Christmas event.

"At Sesame Place, our goal is to create a fun and enjoyable experience for the entire family," said **Robert Caruso**, Sesame Place park president. "We're thrilled to be one of the first theme parks to offer this new Transferable Pass which allows our season pass members to bring a different guest with them each time they visit."

As a park geared toward younger visitors, Sesame Place recognized the need to create a product for season pass members that would allow them to bring along an extra pair of hands to help navigate their day at the park. With a Transferable Season Pass, a grandparent, friend or babysitter can accompany a season pass holder and share in the fun at Sesame Place.

The Transferable Season Passes ($163) must be purchased in addition to a 2015 Season Pass - Sesame ($111), Big Bird ($153) or Super Grover ($231). Season pass holders can enjoy unlimited visits to the park in 2015, plus the rest of 2014. Pass holders receive: 30 percent savings on in-park food, merchandise, and character dining; free general parking; exclusive Sesame Street character meet & greets (May – Oct); advance seating at shows (May – Oct); early ride times on select attractions (July & Aug); exclusive Season Pass holder events. Guests visiting on a Transferable Season Pass must be accompanied by the "Host" season pass member.

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Interlink's Mike Anderson dies in U.K. at 70

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, United Kingdom — **Mike Anderson**, well-known throughout the amusement and theme park industry as part of the Interlink team, passed away at the end of August.

Mike Anderson

Anderson began his career in the industry somewhat by default after he was asked to build a monorail for the U.K. park Flamingoland in North Yorkshire in 1983. In that same year he founded ride manufacturer Mimafab Ltd. and subsequently went on to work for Interlink in 1986/87.

Anderson's particular areas of expertise were in engineering and fabrication, in particular with water-based leisure attractions, while he also had many years' experience in the operation of rides in parks. He managed Interlink's U.K. company, working as technical and commercial director, and was also responsible for the company's rides installation sub division. He celebrated his 70th birthday on July 15.

Robert Goldsack, industry historian, dies at 82

NASHUA, N.H. — **Robert J. "Bob" Goldsack**, 82, of Nashua, passed away August 13, 2014 at St. Joseph Hospital in Nashua.

Born and raised in Plainfield, New Jersey, he was the son of Robert and Marguerite Goldsack.

During the Korean War, he served aboard aircraft carriers during a four year Navy hitch. He was awarded the United States Korean Service Medal, United Nations Korean Medal, American Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal and the South Korean Government's Commerative Medal.

In 1953, Bob married the love of his life, Joan Stevens, a classmate from grammar and high school, who passed away in January 2008, after 54 years of marriage. They were the parents of nine children.

Robert J. Goldsack

A lifetime historian and writer documenting the outdoor entertainment business, his first book *The World of Mirth* was published in 1984. Fourteen more books followed including: *Remembering Benson's Wild Animal Farm; A History of New England Amusement Parks; Those Big and Colorful Railroad Carnivals; A History of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus* and *Behind the Scenes at the Eastern States Exposition - The Big E*. In 2010, he produced an updated book on *Benson's Wild Animal Farm* for Arcadia Publishing.

Goldsack also published his own quarterly magazine "Midway Journal Illustrated" from 1996 through 2000, and was then hired by the Circus Fans of America to serve as editor and publisher of *The White Tops*, the organization's bimonthly magazine. He retired from that position in 2006.

For five straight years he was commissioned to write a two page historical story for "Midway Marquee," the OABA's yearbook.

Robert was predeceased by his wife Joan and son Garrett.

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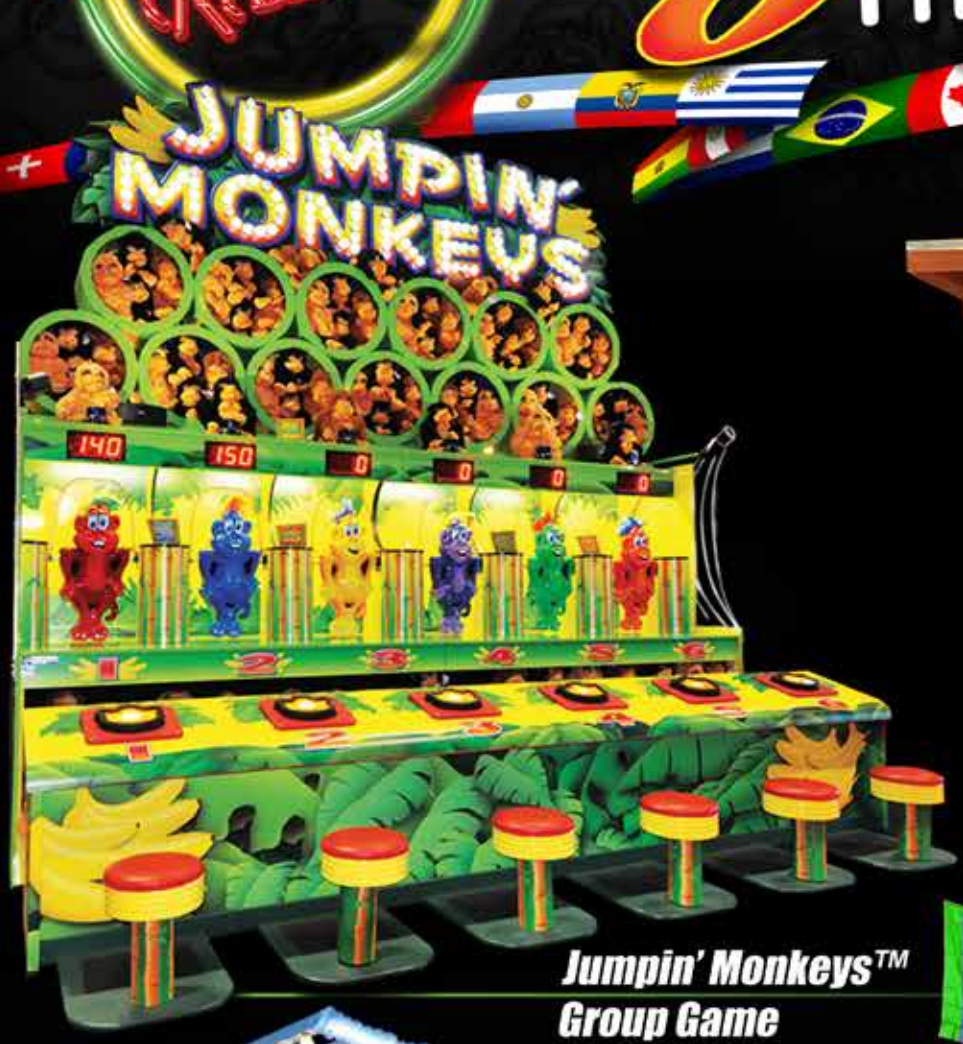

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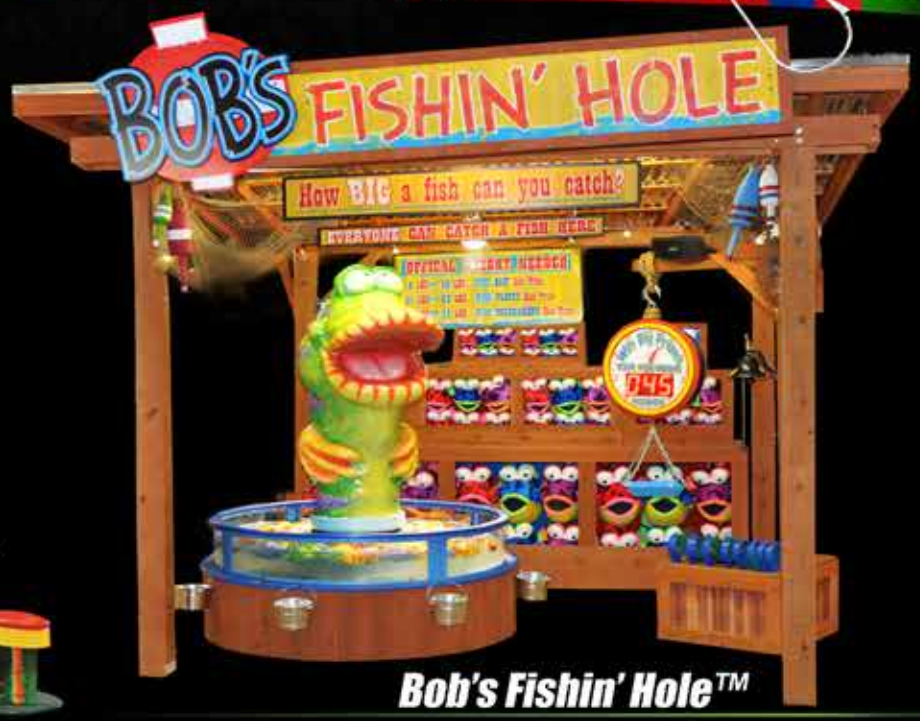

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AIMS honors Mark Moore

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — During AIMS International's annual board meeting, held September 4, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency Mission Bay in San Diego, Calif., board member and past president, **Mark Moore** was honored for his service to AIMS International. **Roger Berry**, board president, presented him with a plaque inscribed, "The board of directors honors Mark Moore in appreciation for your tireless service and dedication to AIMS International, Ltd. Your commitment to amusement safety has helped educate our industry."

AIMS Board President, Roger Berry, left, presents a plaque to Mark Moore, right, in recognition of his outstanding service to AIMS International.
AT/DAN FEICHT

In presenting the plaque, Berry noted that Moore has done an incredible job for several years as a volunteer executive director of AIMS International and thanked him of behalf of the entire board.

AIMS International holds its annual board of directors meeting in conjunction with the Golden Ticket Awards, presented annually by *Amusement Today.*

2014 AIMS board of directors at GTA's

The AIMS International board of directors held its annual meeting on September 4, 2014 at the Hyatt Mission Bay in San Diego, Calif. Shown here are front row, left to right: Brian King; Tony Claassen; Franceen Gonzales; George Tso; Executive Director, Karen Oertley; President Roger Berry; Seminar Operations Manager, Holly Coston and Jim Seay. Back row, left to right: Mike Gutknecht; Patty Sullivan; Mark Moore; Timo Klaus; Tim Viox and Tom Sheehan. Not pictured: Certification Manager, Jan King; Mike Withers and Linda Freeman. The board of directors was held in conjunction with the Golden Ticket Awards, an annual industry event held by *Amusement Today.*
AT/DAN FEICHT

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by *AT* & AIMS.

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IRT/iROC ride training school set for Feb. 4-6, 2015, Circus Circus Adventuredome

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — International Ride Training, LLC (IRT) will host their annual iROC school in Las Vegas, Nevada, February 4 – 6, 2015 at the Circus Circus Adventuredome, Hotel and Casino. The iROC school is designed as an operational train the trainer curriculum that includes the standards of performance for specific operator skills with significant focus on preparation of teaching the standards.

The 2014 school, with approximately 100 training instructors in attendance and more than 40 parks represented, was a sell out crowd. IRT managing members, Cindee Huddy and Patty Beazley, anticipate the attendance to increase for 2015.

New for 2015, IRT is offering a three-tiered program that will ensure operations instructors are more effective teachers of ride operator skills, both in the classroom and in the field. In the past years, IRT has offered certifications to Instructor and Trainers. In 2015, certification will also be extended to the front line operator. Furthermore, IRT has transformed and enhanced the iROC 10 critical components of ride operator safety basics that support and complement the manufacturers requirements of operations and compliance with ASTM F24.

Huddy stated, "We are committed to strengthening trainer and operator effectiveness across the amusement industry continuum, which is why we focused the upcoming year on building a strong team of experts to review and help refine our training program. This process includes opportunities for current instructors to see, reflect upon and discuss how the program can best be used as a tool to support professional growth in an effective educator practice for instructors and trainers."

The newly enhanced iROC school includes not only the educator developed program regarding specific operator safety skills and preparation of teaching the standards, but also includes:

- The ten (10) critical components of ride operator safety.
- Written lesson plans that detail the teaching protocol for each critical component.
- A customizable education program provided to the staff regarding individual properties needs.
- Program materials will be available at the on-line portal by individual user.
- Certification for the instructor license and trainer including CEU's (Continuing Education Units of Credits.)

The 2015 IROC School includes the optional Operator Level:

- An operator program may be purchased as an education program or as a full Operator Certification.
- Video instruction for each critical component of ride operator safety is included for the operator level.
- A set of "What if" scenario scripts created by amusement industry experts on handling height issues, riders who do not fit in seats and restraints provided, loose articles removal, lost item situations, ride downtime and other challenging operational situations.
- Operator education program may be used as an additional building block to a company's training program or as a stand alone program.
- An operator certification is optional and a CEU of credit may be obtained for the operator level.

Beazley concludes, "Our goal at IRT is for all of operations, from instructor to trainer down to the front line, to have the tools available to them to do their best. We believe our school and training provides this opportunity for all operational teams."

For further information and pricing regarding IRT's iROC school, visit www.ridetraining.com or contact (615) 714-2617 and via email at cindee@ridetraining.com.

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2014 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS — SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

Golden Ticket Awards spectacularly hosted by SeaWorld San Diego

STORY: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — On September 5-7, more than 230 attendees experienced the **2014 Golden Ticket Awards, presented annually by *Amusement Today*,** at **SeaWorld San Diego** and surrounding attractions. The event kicked off with registration at the **Hyatt Regency Mission Bay** located just a stone's throw from the marine life park and right at the edge of Mission Bay with all its beauty and atmosphere. SeaWorld staff was on hand to efficiently welcome everyone with credentials and a 50th anniversary tote bag stuffed with goodies from parks and sponsors.

Above, winners in 29 categories took home the coveted 2014 Golden Tickets after the results were announced live from SeaWorld San Diego on Sept. 6. The San Diego marine life park was the host park, which saw a near record attendance of more than 230 industry professionals enjoy the weekend event. Below, *Amusement Today*, graciously thanks the many presenters who gave their time to make the ceremony a huge success and the best event yet. AT/DAN FEICHT

See Golden Ticket Awards event photos and ceremony video at:

www.GOLDENTICKETAWARDS.com

Opening events

With an afternoon free to explore the San Diego area, many attendees took advantage to enjoy shuttle service to the **USS Midway** as part of the weekend event. The **USS Midway Museum** allows visitors to enter the world that 225,000 Midway sailors had occupied before, with 60 exhibits and 29 restored aircraft. Complimentary admission was provided to Golden Ticket guests.

The majority of attendees were on hand for the evening festivities and it started with shuttles taking industry professionals over to **Belmont Park**. This seaside park has rejuvenated tourism and local business at Mission Beach and offers various entertainment options. The crowning achievement is the **1925 Giant Dipper** that has seen new life now for 25 seasons following an extensive refurbishment that lead to its rebirth in 1990. **Wendy Crain**, general manager of the **San Diego Coaster Company** and **Belmont Park**, officially welcomed people to Belmont Park, gathering attendees below the roller

▸ See GTA, page 51

THANK YOU!

SeaWorld San Diego for a wonderful and memorable 2014 Golden Ticket Awards event!

50th CELEBRATION SeaWorld Sea of Surprises

2014 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS — SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

Future industry leaders take the stage at Golden Ticket Awards

STORY: *Janice Witherow*
jwitherow@amusementtoday.com

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Four of our industry's future leaders took the stage and assisted in the presentation of awards at ***Amusement Today's* 2014 Golden Ticket Awards**. For the 10th year, *Amusement Today* honored a group of outstanding students who plan to pursue a career in the amusement business and are employed by this year's host park of **SeaWorld San Diego** and **Aquatica San Diego** and neighboring parks **Belmont Park** and the **San Diego Zoo** as **Ms. and Mr. Golden Tickets**.

These four individuals exemplify the spirit and integrity of the amusement park industry by promoting the cornerstones of safety, service, courtesy and cleanliness at the highest level, while consistently exceeding job expectations. This is an annual designation by *Amusement Today* to promote education in the field of hospitality and amusement, as well as to recognize future leaders in the amusement industry.

The 2014 class of Ms. and Mr. Golden Tickets assisted with the ceremony by presenting awards to the winning parks; plus each received a complimentary one-year subscription to **Amusement Today**, and an Office Depot gift card for school and career supplies. *Amusement Today* applauds the following students:

•**Austin Oducayen** of **SeaWorld San Diego**, who has worked at the park for two years in the Entertainment Department. Austin is a graduate of San Diego State University, where he earned his degree in Film Production.

•**Madeline Gaspar** of **Aquatica San Diego**. Madeline has worked at the water park for two seasons and is in the Park Operations Department. She is attending Southwestern College in Chula Vista, Calif., where she is studying Film Production.

•**Flor Gomez** of **Belmont Park**. Flor has worked at the park for eight years and currently is employed in the Ticket Sales Department. She is a student at Mesa College in San Diego, where she is majoring in Marketing.

•**Elijah Hewitt** of the **San Diego Zoo**. Elijah has worked at the Zoo for six years and is currently employed in the Park Operations Department. He is a graduate of Washington State University in Pullman, Wash., where he earned a degree in Hospitality Business Management.

During its annual awards ceremony, *Amusement Today* presented the 2014 class of Ms. and Mr. Golden Tickets. They are, from left to right: Elijah Hewitt, San Diego Zoo; Madeline Gaspar, Aquatica San Diego; Flor Gomez, Belmont Park and Austin Oducayen, SeaWorld San Diego.
AT/DAN FEICHT

GTA

Continued from page 50

coaster for a special ceremony. Lovingly restored, one of the classic **Prior and Church** vehicles that ran on the coaster in the 1920s was given to the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives**. This outstanding contribution was enthusiastically received by the NRCMA board members and graciously acknowledged by the owners, enthusiasts and industry icons that made the coaster's rebirth possible. On hand to speak along with Crain were **Dana Morgan** of the **San Diego Coaster Company**, **San Diego City Councilman Ed Harris**; and **Richard Munch** and **Pete Owens** of the NRCMA.

A delightful reception on a balcony setting overlooking the Pacific and the **Wave House**, sponsored by **Chance Rides**, offered the first location for colleagues to network and visit before catching shuttles back to the host facility, SeaWorld Orlando.

Upon entry, guests were guided to the dinner area where SeaWorld chefs had provided a stunning array of culinary options, beverages and desserts. Nestled alongside the **Manta Ray** touch pool exhibit and below the swerving tracks of the **Manta** roller coaster, dinner guests enjoyed a perfect evening including live music as night fell on the beautiful venue. After knocking back a few of the specially-created Golden Ticket drinks, a fresh brewed gourmet coffee or building a s'more, several attendees hopped aboard the dual-launched Manta, which is manufactured by **Mack Rides**, one of the sponsors of the evening along with **Leisure Labs LLC**. Tours within the operational back areas of Manta were made available for industry visitors as well.

SeaWorld San Diego's Vice President of Entertainment Rick Schuiteman and park General Manager John Reilly welcome the Golden Ticket Award attendees to the park, to kick off the two-hour show presented in the Mission Bay Theater.
AT/DAN FEICHT

SeaWorld's day to shine

Saturday morning guests could venture over to the SeaWorld property to see it in full operation with special tours and perks made available for attendees. Particularly well-received was the private Q&A session following the Shamu show.

Eventually evening arrived and the big event drew near. Starting with a cocktail reception within the **Turtle Reef** facility, Golden Ticket Awards attendees were treated to an indoor viewing of the marine life behind glass while enjoying scrumptious appetizers and cocktails. It was a great opportunity to continue networking with fellow professionals in a relaxed setting.

Dining with Shamu was the location for dinner and it couldn't be more aptly named. Alongside the killer whale pool, guests were overwhelmed with delicious options for numerous culinary tastes. Near the end of dinner, animal trainers were on hand to inform everyone about the animal species they had been observing and treated the audience with some splashing acrobatics. It was a slam dunk hit! **Chris Gray** of **Skyline Attractions** laughed, "I took about 150 pictures at dinner. I have to delete about half or my phone is going to crash before I leave."

Time for the awards!

The **SeaWorld Sea Street Band** led attendees to the premiere show of the night. Inside the **Mission Bay Theater**, the Golden Ticket Awards ceremony was quickly underway. With musical entertainment ranging from song, choreography, interpretive dance, costumed characters and multi-media visuals, the show was kicked off in grand style. Of particular note, was the tremendous voice of **Cassie Bowerman** and the wildly popular emcee **Tim Roberts**. Roberts kept each segment of the show flowing with humor, flair and interaction.

Following a welcome from SeaWorld San Diego General Manager **John Reilly** and Vice President of Entertainment **Rick Schuiteman**, *AT*'s **Janice Witherow** introduced **Ms. and Mr. Golden Tickets**. These four young professionals, from area facilities, are seeking careers in the amusement industry and assisted with the flow of the ceremony. See sidebar page 51.

See GTA, page 52

2014 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS — SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

GTA

Continued from page 51

Once the categories were underway, several presenters from manufacturers, businesses and organizations within the industry began handing out the accolades. As always, acceptance comments were graced with touching stories and moments of laughter. Presenters included familiar faces, such as the popular pairing of **Zamperla's Ramon Rosario** with **Pamela Landwirth from Give Kids the World**. But new presenters offered fresh voices and perspective.

First time presenter **Stefan Doomanis**, president of **Dynamic Advantage, Inc.**, enthusiastically enjoyed the show. "I cannot tell you how much fun I had being a presenter," Doomanis told *AT*. "It was a blast. It was great to reconnect with those I met last year, as well as meeting some great new people."

Midway through the ceremony, AT Publisher-in-Chief **Gary Slade** brought poignancy to the event with his **Publishers Picks**. Beginning with the **Legends Series**, Slade acknowledged **George Millay** creating a sea of change by opening the first SeaWorld park — host facility SeaWorld San Diego – 50 years ago, as well as pioneering the water park industry. Two of Millay's children accepted the award and shared stories.

The **Turnstile Award** was given to **Water World** outside Denver for reinvesting in iconic attractions, a pairing of dark ride style theming that make the rides completely unique to that property.

The **Person of the Year** acknowledgement came in

two forms this year. **Jeff Pike** has grown in what he considers his dream job, giving acknowledgement to mentor **Mike Boodley**, co-founder of **Great Coasters International, Inc.** Developing a friendship over time, Pike recently gave the gift of life when he found he was an ideal match as a donor when Boodley needed a kidney transplant. As eyes throughout the house were moistened, Boodley was in the audience and was the first to stand in applause, followed by the entire audience. Surprised and moved, Pike ended his comments at the mic with the profound statement, "Everybody in this room has someone they can say thank you to for getting them where they are… [and they don't] need to give up a kidney to show their appreciation; but if anything can come from this, before the week is out, maybe call that person who helped you and say thank you."

Equally as touching was the **Persons of the Year** designation given to **SeaWorld Rescue** teams of all the SeaWorld parks who dedicate time and expense in rehabilitating wildlife injured, ill or stranded, giving them a new beginning. Leading the way in preservation and environmental conservation stewardship, once again the crowd gave a standing ovation. It was followed by a solemn moment as the industry gave an In Memoriam tribute.

A mid-show interlude of uplifting entertainment primed the audience for the conclusion of awards, which featured big wins and a surprise or two.

Taking **Best New Ride**, two temperamental attractions finally received their due. **Verrückt** at **Schlitterbahn Kansas City** took the water park category with its world's tallest waterslide claim, and **Knoebels**' long-awaited **Flying Turns** snagged the Ticket in the amusement park category.

The biggest surprise of the night came with **Europa-Park** grabbing the last category – **Best Park**. Breaking a 16-year streak from **Cedar Point**, Europa-Park's **Chip Cleary** and **Jacob Wahl** accepted the award, but let **Roland Mack**, via a taped comment from Germany, say the most meaningful words, including acknowledging the spectacular record of the Sandusky mega-park. Regretting large commitments preventing him being in attendance, Mack said he wished he could have been there that evening. "I'd like to have a beer with you," he said, bringing a chuckle to the audience.

Following the ceremony, attendees ventured outside for dessert and an impressive fireworks display over Mission Bay. Due to firework restrictions, the SeaWorld management was a bit on pins and needles as the show's comments elongated the ceremony's length longer than expected. But the chocolaty finish with color bursting over the California waters made for a perfect finish to an enthusiastically received evening.

Paul Couch of **Gary Musick Productions** said of the evening, "SeaWorld has done a wonderful job presenting themselves and accommodating the Golden Ticket Awards. Their hospitality has been conspicuous and plentiful."

Once it was all said and done, Schuiteman beamed. "What an incredible weekend! Where do I begin? The celebration at Belmont Park, or riding Manta, or meeting killer whale trainers or all the delicious food?" He adds, "I think the highlight for me was seeing everyone come together for the fantastic ceremony. I loved the live performances, but it was fun seeing all the familiar faces from our industry recognize and saluting each other through the awards program. What a great time. I can't wait for New York!"

SeaWorld San Diego team members were on hand to greet Golden Ticket attendees during the registration held at the Hyatt Regency Mission Bay courtyard. Shown here, l to r are: Mary DeMaria, entertainment project supervisor; Cari Mac Mootry, entertainment events manager and Debbie Acosta, marketing representative.
AT/DAN FEICHT

Golden Ticket Awards attendees were treated to numerous SeaWorld park tours, one of which was held following the One Ocean show held at the Shamu Theater. Below, those attending the tour took time for this group photo, with a little support from Shamu and friends.
AT/SAMMY PICCOLA and DAN FEICHT

Sunday fun

Attendees who were able to stay over on Sunday that weekend had options of visiting SeaWorld's nearby **Aquatica** or the famous **San Diego Zoo**. Or both! **Ted Molter**, chief marketing officer of the San Diego Zoo, welcomed GTA visitors that day during a light reception giving both his background in the industry and some historic information of the zoo itself.

As industry professionals began to disperse, all commented on how the weekend was a home run.

"This may have been my first time at the Golden Ticket Awards, but I can guarantee it won't be the last!" says **Brian Duke**, marketing consultant for **Sacoa Playcard**. "Being a 30-year industry vet who has exhibited or attended almost every amusement show or conference in the world, I was really impressed by how well organized and productive this whole event was in comparison. It was the perfect combination of fun and productivity, giving me plenty of time to meet new people and also talk with past customers and old friends."

"On top of a fantastic weekend, it looks like I may have picked up a client or two while I was here," **Stefan Doomanis** adds.

"There were definitely a lot of opportunities that came out of this event, and everyone with *Amusement Today* was so helpful," responds Duke. "I can't wait for next year in New York and getting our company even more involved with the Golden Ticket Awards."

Jeff Filicko, public relations manager of Kennywood, also looks forward to 2015. "I was planning on coming even if Kennywood didn't win, but taking home a Golden Ticket Award made the weekend even more amazing. The Golden Ticket Awards is a very well done event, and I really enjoy spending time with peers from every aspect of the amusement industry. I'm already planning to attend next year's event in New York City!"

The **2015 Golden Ticket Awards** will be held in New York City, hosted by **CAI Parks** operators of **Victorian Gardens**, **Luna Park** and the historic **Coney Island Cyclone** on September 11 and 12.

Complete results of the 2014 Golden Ticket awards are available at: www.GoldenTicketAwards.com.

2014 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS — SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

Golden Ticket attendees enjoy funfilled weekend

USS MIDWAY:
Timo Klaus, KumbaK.

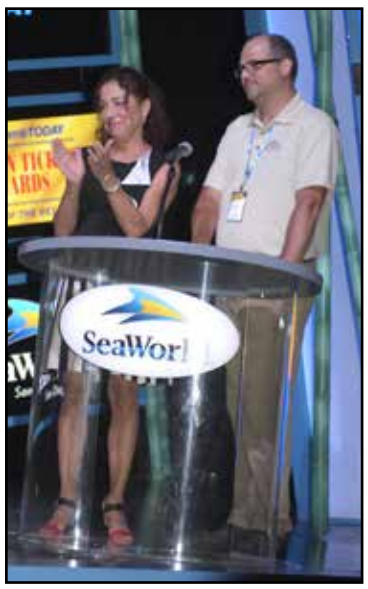
BELMONT PARK:
Patty Sullivan, Eli Bridge with Clair Hain Jr., Great Coasters Intl.

AT PHOTOS/DAN FEICHT unless otherwise noted

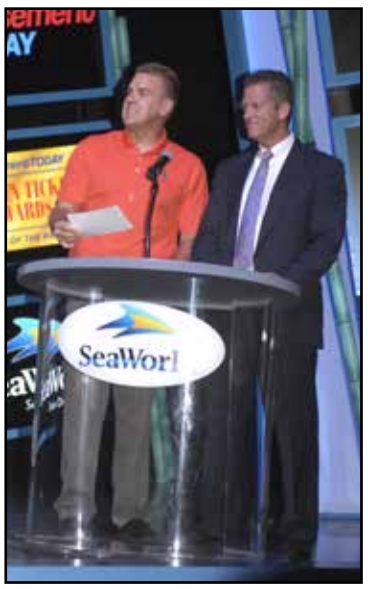
BELMONT PARK: Above, Dana Morgan, Chance Morgan; Charles Canfield, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Dick Chance, Chance Rides.
SAN DIEGO ZOO: Left, GTA attendees enjoy the roof deck bus tour.
AT/TIM BALDWIN (Zoo)

PRESENTING: In their annual style, Zamperla's Ramon Rosario has Pamela Landwirth, Give Kids The World laughing.

PRESENTING: Bob Dean, Leisure Labs and Franceen Gonzales, WhiteWater West.



PRESENTING:
Gina Guglielmi, Intermark Ride Group and Chris Gray, Skyline Attractions.



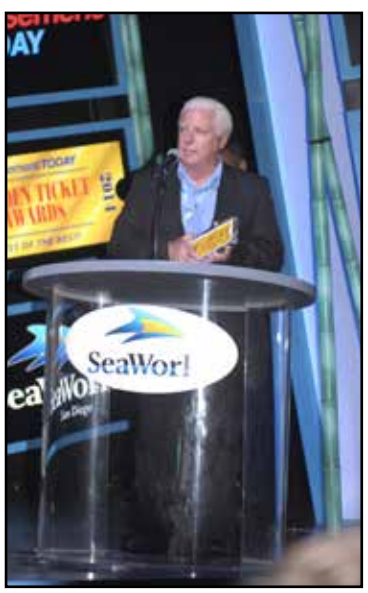
PRESENTING:
John Robinson, W.H.R. Inc. and Steve Boney, Maurer Sohne and ABC Rides.

PRESENTING:
Michael Graham, The Gravity Group and Stephan Doomanis with Dynamic Advantage.

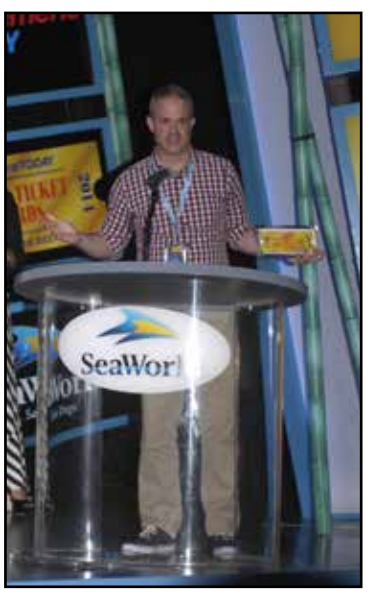
LEGENDS SERIES - GEORGE MILLAY:
Chrislyn Millay and Gavin Millay with AT Publisher Gary Slade (center).

TURNSTILE AWARD:
Thomas Lynch and Jo Ann Cortez, Hyland Hills Water World.

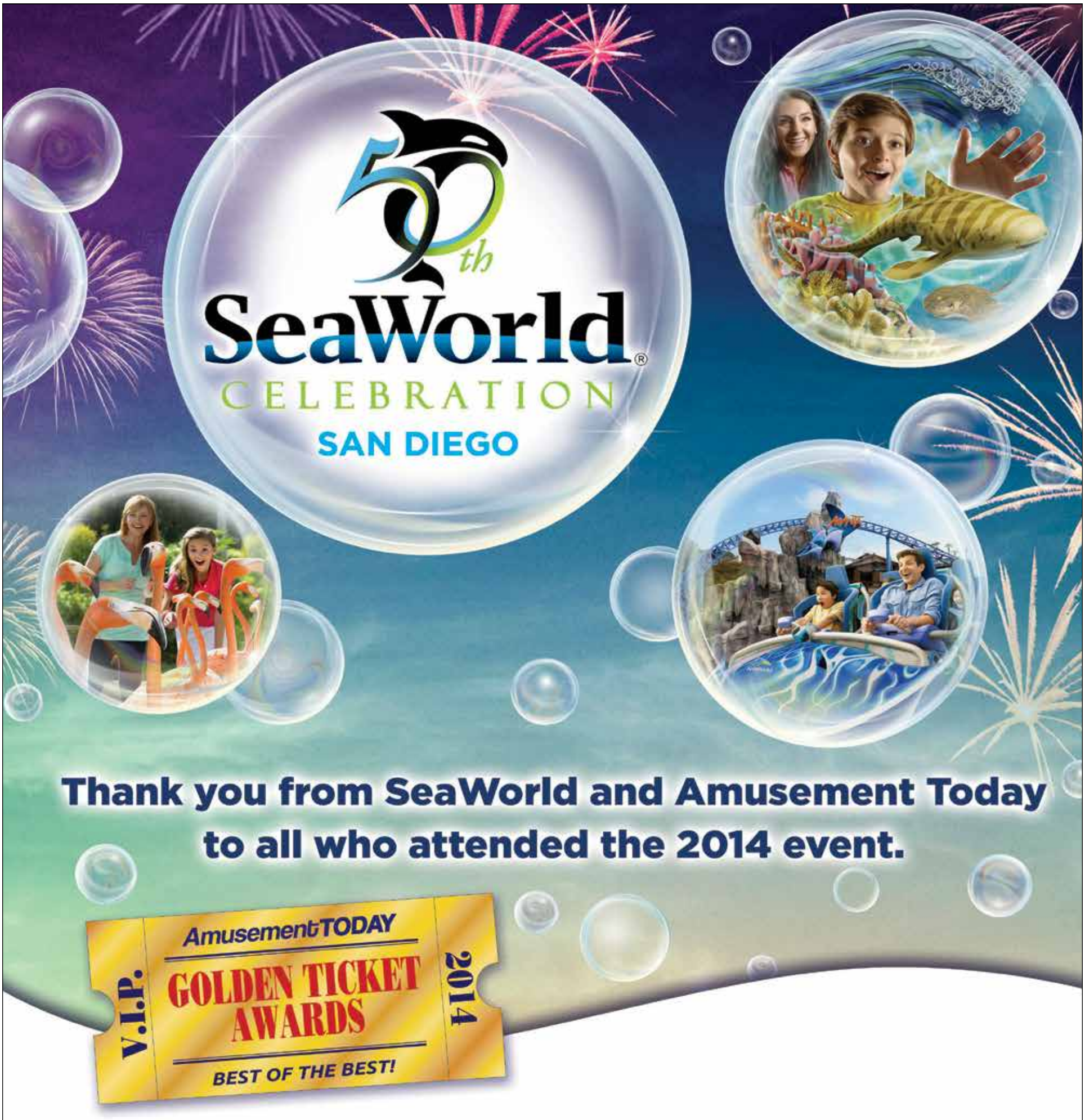
WINNER: Holiday World's Leah Koch and Lauren Koch took home two Golden Tickets.



WINNER:
Universal Orlando Resorts' Rich Costales took home four Golden Tickets.



WINNER: Idlewild and SoakZone Jeffrey Croushore won Best Children's Park.



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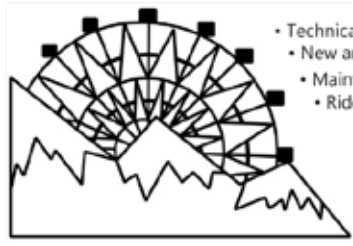

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